

History of the Cult of Narasimha in

Telangana (Andhra Pradesh)

(From Ancient to the Modern Period)



Dr. MADABHUSINI NARASIMHACHARYA

M.A. (Pol), M.A. (His), B.Ed, M.Phil, Ph.D

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Dr. M. NARASIMHA CHARYA

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To
My wife
Smt M. Kamala
(1942 - 1986.A.D.)



There are numerous centres of Narasimha Worship in Telangāṇa region of Āndhra Pradesh. The space devoted to this cult in general religious histories of India and Āndhra Pradesh is very meagre. As such, there is a need for a detailed work on the cult of Narasimha in Telangāṇa. The author has earlier published a comprehensive work on the cult of Narasimha in Āndhra Pradesh. This book, therefore, supplies a long felt need,

The author deals comprehensively with the general history of the centres of Narasimha worship from ancient to the modern period, taped from archaeology and literature, including the Stalapurāṇas, traditions, oral and recorded and interviews held with the experts in the field to elicit information about this cult. A general survey is made about the spread of the cult of god Narasimha throughout the country. The book gives an analysis of different types of images and sculptures of god Narasimha, found at various places. The history of the select centres of Narasimha Worship is useful not only to the scholars in the field, but also to the devotees and to the general public. These centres of worship have been the centres of our culture. Thus, this study of culture paves the way for integration among the three regions i.e. Rayalasila, Coastal Andhra and Telangāṇa of Andhra Pradesh.

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FOREWORD

The present publication "History of the Cult of Narasimha in Telangāna" is originally the thesis of Dr. M. Narasimhāchārya, for which he was awarded the degree of M. Phil. in Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology by the Osmania University. The topic was suggested by me and he worked under my supervision. My choice of the topic and the candidate turned out to be happy, since Śrī. M. Narasimhāchārya carried on the research work under the Faculty Improvement Programme with the utmost sincerity and devotion. While this work in itself is a good contribution to the studies in Religious History of Telingāna, the scholar continued his studies on History of the Cult of Narasimha in Andhra Pradesh (From 11th century A.D. to 17th century A.D.) for the Ph.D. degree and the Ph.D. thesis has been published by Śrī Mālōla Grantha Māla, Śrī Ahōbila Math, Hyderabad. The Telugu University has also given for the publication financial assistance, just as for the present publication T.T.D. Tirupati is financially assisting.

If the Cult of Jagannātha reigns supreme in Orissa, the Cult of Narasimha tremendously influences Telangāna. The M. Phil thesis of Dr. M. Narasimhāchārya contains all the source material collected by him on the topic and will be helpful to scholars, who wish to pursue deeply aspects relating to this subject. Chronological limits have not been set, since the idea was to investigate into a live cult and gather the relevant source material for it.

At a time when the uniqueness of Indian Culture is thoroughly being probed, Dr. M. Narasimhāchārya's work, with the source material will be highly valuable.

Dr. M. Radhakrishna Sarma
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Date : 12-8-1989.

FOREWORD

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I will be failing in my duty if I don't express my deep sense of gratitude to my parents, Rāghavāchārya and Smt. Āgamma of Sircilla, Karīmṇagar district. I am thankful to my wife for her encouragement and help in completing this work. I am also thankful to my son, M.K.S. Murty for attending the printing work carefully. I owe a debt of gratitude to the T.T.D. Tirupati for their financial assistance of Rs. 10,000=00 for the publication of this book.

I am highly grateful to the scholars in the field, executive officers of the temples, priests and the devotees of god Narasimha for their opinions, when they were interviewed for collecting data for this work. I express my deep sense of indebtedness to all the scholars, whose works and opinions in the field have benefited me immensely. Finally, it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge my obligation to Śrī. P. Subhāsh, Tirumala Printing works, Hyderābād for bringing out this book in a short period.

Dr. MADABHUSHINI NARASIMHACHARYA



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Religious cults played a significant role in moulding the life and institutions of India from the early historic times. Etymologically the word 'cult' means an act of worship and an organized system of religious worship. The word 'cult' is French and 'cultus' is Latin. It means action and honour with worship.¹ Another interpretation is that from the Latin word 'cultus', came cult. It means worship and an organised system of religious worship.² The other meaning for the word 'cult' is cultivation, homage or worship and a system of religious belief and the ceremonies or ritual of a system of religious belief.³

Von Wiese and Howard Becker critically analysing cult say that "while" this term has been less clearly defined, it has been most generally used in scholarly literature to designate a more loosely organized and more individualistic group. This usage must be distinguished from the scholarly use of the word 'cult' to refer to the ritual act of worship"⁴. According to G. H. Mead "the cult has a mysterious value which is attached to it that we cannot fully rationalize and therefore we preserve it in the form which it always has had and its social setting."⁵ Dr. Irving King, Prof. E. S. Ames, Dr. F. G. Henke and Roborston Smith state that "the various ceremonies of the cult grow out of social activities, performed by the group in unison or co-operation, these social activities themselves having their origin in practical needs and fundamental instincts"⁶. Right Reverend Henry White Head says that "the cult is consisted of shrines, symbols or images, ministrants (priests) and the festivals"⁷.

The above derivations and definitions of the term 'cult' help us to state the factors that make a cult. The following

may be identified as the principal ingredients, which go to make a cult.

- (a) Belief
- (b) Symbol worship and
- (c) Rituals and festivals.

a) Belief

Faith and cult are mutually inter-active. The particulars forms of every cult in general are largely dependent upon explicit religious beliefs. It is the 'emotion of belief' which inspires the heart of a devotee rather than mere intellectual assent. Belief dominates the individual more than any thing supported by the accumulated traditions of the past. Thus for example faith in particular gods gave rise to many cults in Hinduism. Growth in popular belief in a cult helps for its development. Belief forms as the bed rock of a cult.

b) Symbol worship :

Vishnubharmottara Purāṇa states that 'the gods were visible in their physical forms in the Satya, Tīrta and Dwāpāra Yugas; but with the advent of Kali, they can be seen only in images'⁸ Hindu devotees worship the Lord to attain material prosperity and spiritual merit. The idolatry form strikingly utilizes the support of the sense of man. It helps to concentrate his attention on it. He finds reinforcement for his faith in the presence of a physical object, which he has been trained by force of habit from his infancy, to associate with the Divine. Thus, the symbol or idol is useful in aiding visualization and concentration. A religious symbol can also gain a power over the mind, which can defy the forces of reason and doubt. The concept of faith on the image of a deity is based on its unique sublimation to the very position of god-head, which is the object of the adoration of the

devotee. The images of the Hindu gods and goddesses are representations of the various conceptions of divine attributes.⁹

c) Rituals and Festivals

Any ritual observance designed to bring man into nearer relation with the unseen powers of nature is prayer. In this broad sense, prayer includes not merely the spoken or enacted word, but also dramatic and symbolic ceremonies.¹⁰ The word 'rite' came from 'ritus' a Latin word, which means probe.¹¹ The Latin word 'ritus' means a custom especially a religious custom and the word ritual came from French.¹² The dictionaries give us various meanings to the word 'ritual'. It means pertaining or relating to, connected with rites, prescribed order of performing religious or other devotional service and the performance of ritual acts. The plural number of the word means ritual observances and ceremonial acts.¹³ The other dictionary gives meaning to the word 'ritual' as of relating to or employed in rites or a ritual, forming a ritual, ceremonial, the forms of conducting a devotional service especially as established by tradition or by sacerdotal prescription, a code or system of rites, a book containing the rites or ceremonial forms to be observed by an organization and an act of ritual.¹⁴ Rituals are the ceremonies performed by the priest in a temple. During the performance of the rituals, the priest recites some sacred formulae to invoke the god and worships Him in accordance with the 'mantras'. The way of worship is prescribed in the 'mantrās'. These 'mantrās' are said to have intrinsic value not only to the priest who utters them, but also to the devotees who attentively hear them. The devotees believe that certain seed words have unmeasurable value when uttered in the presence of god and they appeal to the hearts of the people when they hear them in the temple. Generally the 'mantrās' are for the purification of God and His blessings for the welfare of the humanity in general. In certain temples rituals are performed by the

devotees on payment to the temple authorities with a view to gain the favour of the Lord.

Festivals are the special occasions for performing special rituals to the Lord. During the performance of these rituals, there is a large congregation of the devotees who witness the ceremony. The devotees ardently believe that if they visit the Lord on these days, they will attain material prosperity and spiritual merit. Men and Women attend these functions at the temples. These functions impress on the mind of the devotees, poor and rich alike and promote for the development of belief on a particular cult. The fairs, which are conducted generally on the occasion of annual festival of the Lord, bring people closer together. Fairs and the festivals are the occasions for the social gathering of the people. These provide an opportunity to the people to understand, see and spread the importance of their chosen god and feel pleasure with the spiritual atmosphere that pervades in and surrounding the temple. The rituals in temple proceeding from morning to the night, attract and impress the large gathering of the devotees on special occasions like festivals. The rituals performed in a temple may be divided into six categories.

- a) Nityōtsavās (daily rituals).
- b) Pakshōtsavās (fortnightly rituals).
- c) Māsōtsavās (monthly rituals).
- d) Samvatsarōtsavār (annual ceremony).
- e) General Hindu festivals and Tirunakshas of Ālvārs and Āchāryās.
- f) Special rituals on demand by the devotees on payment.

During performance of the rituals, which present a feast

to the eyes and the ears of the devotees, men and women congregate in the temple to witness them. Some devotees patronise the rituals by payment to the temple even in ordinary days in fulfilment of their vows. The other rituals mentioned above, are celebrated by the temple committees in general. The temple becomes a focal point for different people, local and surrounding people, to witness the ceremonies and on festive occasions, a number of people visit the temple to pay their respect to the Lord and gain His favour. The rituals and festivals promote for the popularity of the temples dedicated to the different gods and help for the growth and spread of the cults.

Among the several religious cults in India, the cult of Narasimha is an important and powerful one. There are numerous centres of worship of Narasimha spread in different parts of our country. But this cult is more wide spread in South India and a number of temples of Narasimha are concentrated in the South. In Āndhra Pradesh there are sizeable number of temples dedicated to this deity. Particularly in the region of Telangāna, this deity and cult are popular. There are more than two hundred temples on record in this region.

As per the survey made by the author in Telangāna area, there are 176 known centres, where Narasimha worship is going on today.

S.No.	Name of the District	Number of Centres of worship
1.	Ādilābād.	7
2.	Hyderābād.	14
3.	Karīmīnagar.	35
4.	Khammam.	11
5.	Mahabūbnagar	19

6.	Medak.	17
7.	Nalgonda.	27
8.	Nizāmābād.	14
9.	Rāngā Reddy.	5
10.	Warāngal.	27

Many of these are pilgrim centres, where people go in thousands to redeem their vows. Many persons and places bear the name of Narasimha.

The space devoted to Narasimha cult in general religious histories of India, is very meagre. Even in specialised works of religious development in India, such as "Development of Religion in South India,"¹⁵ the space given to this subject is very little. There are separate works on religious sects, such as "The origin and development of Vaisnavism,"¹⁶ "Evolution of Hindu Sects"¹⁷ and "The Vaisnava Sects. The Śaiva Sects-Mother worship".¹⁸ There is a solitary work on religious life with historical perspective entitled "Studies in the Religious life of Ancient and Medieval India".¹⁹ But these also contain very little material on this important cult. There are some specialised works of late on cults such as "The Cult of Viṭhōba"²⁰ "The Cult of Śiva"²¹. "The Cult of Skānda-Kārtikēya in Ancient India".²² "The cult of Jagannātha".²³ and "Śakti cult in Ancient India".²⁴ But so far there has been no comprehensive volume on Narasimha cult. Coming to the religious studies in Āndhra Pradesh, there are a few works on temples in A. P. Such as "Temples and Legends of Āndhra Pradesh"²⁵ and "The Simhachalam Temple".²⁶ Studies devoted to a cult are very few. "Religious institutions and cults in the Deccan"²⁷ does not devote and space to Narasimha cult. The work pertaining to Āndhra Pradesh entitled "Religion in Āndhra"²⁸ deals with different aspect of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in Āndhra in a general way. There is only a single book on the temples of Telangāna with the same title²⁹, dealing comprehensively on

art and architecture of the temples, devoted to the different deities during the reigns of Chālukyās and Kakatīyās of Waraṅgal.

As such, no comprehensive work, till now, has been done on the cult of Narasimha in Āndhra Pradesh or in the region of Telangāṇa. I have chosen this subject for my research work limiting it to the region of Telangāṇa in A. P. An attempt is made to study comprehensively different aspects of Narasimha i. e., origin, growth and development of the cult in this region through historical times to the present day with the help of literary and archaeological sources together with popular beliefs. The interviews held with some devotees and their religious experiences which are taken with utmost caution, being no less significant in interpreting the devotional aspect of the cult of Narasimha, are taken into account.

Sources

Following are the various sources tapped for tracing and constructing the history of the cult of Narasimha in Telangāṇa area.

- a) Archaeological sources
- b) Literary sources and
- c) Traditions, oral and recorded experiences of the devotees.

a) Archaeological Sources

Archaeological sources include inscriptions, monuments, coins, art, architecture, iconography and sculpture. Inscriptions are veins in the body of history. These are engraved on rocks and incised on copper plates, which show the name of the king, year and the contents of what the donor intended to do. Sometimes the 'donative certificates' were issued to the temples and the individuals by their names for the merit of

their nearest and dearest relatives by the ruling classes. We have a rich treasure of epigraphy pertaining to the history of Telangāna in general, the number of epigraphs being over 2000, only twenty four inscriptions including an unpublished inscription, contain some information of history of the temples dedicated to Narasimha. Out of twenty four inscriptions, only one inscription refers to the establishment of a temple at I. gurūti in Warangal district by a certain Mañtrināju Timmarāju in the year Manmatha, S 1337 (—A D. 1415)⁸⁰. There are seven undated inscriptions, which mention mainly consecration of the deities of images in temples, construction of steps to the temples and gifts to the Lord. The remaining inscriptions throw light on the renovation of the old temple, installation of the images in the temples, donation of cash and kind, gift of lands, gardens and wells, allotting a part of the income through the taxes and charitable contributions to the temple on the eve of solstices and eclipses and for the perpetual maintenance of the temples by the kings, nobles and others. Political history of the dynasties that ruled this area, speak of the munificent measures undertaken by the kings and queens, land-lords, merchants and guilds for the development of the temples. Temples, withstanding the ravages of time, still speak of their past glory. The nature of sanctum, āntarāla and mukhamanṭapa, central four pillars and other pillars carved with rich sculpture, inner and outer walls, art and architecture of the temple, are important aspects which throw light on the religious and cultural aspects of cult history.

The icons of Narasimha found in the area throw light on the cult. The presiding deities of the images of the Lord either carved on the rocks or made of stone and 'utsavā' idols of the Lord, made of metal, are generally in Telangana area. There are a number of temples dedicated to Lord Narasimha in this area, but they contain no historical data to help interpretation. Out of twenty four inscriptions, three refer to the consecration of the deities of the images of lord Narasimha. The earliest consecration of the image of the Lord is found at Vardhamāna puram (Vaidemānu) in Mahabubnagar district on 1st February 1224, by Bhimadeva.⁸¹

The second inscription, dated 16th June 1521, states that the god Narasimha was enshrined on the bank of the river Tungabhadra at Ālampura in Mahabubnagar district.³² But there was already a temple in existence, to which a gift of land by Chākamma was made and she also renovated the old temple of Narasimha in 1093 AD.³³ The last inscription is undated. It states the pratishtha (consecration) of Narasimha by Śrīdhara Yōgi in Hanumakonda City in the month of Āsvayuja.³⁴

There may be temples earlier than the consecration of the images of the Lord for consecration forms a second aspect after the construction of the temple. When an image is broken, in course of time, in a temple, another image is reinstalled in that place and the ceremony of consecration takes place sooner or later. We cannot, therefore, determine the antiquity of the temples on the basis of the installation of the images, which throw light on ritual aspects and on functioning of the temples. Another noteworthy feature of this cult is that there is a sculpture of Pañchamukha Narasimha with sixteen hands, carved on a big rock at Narasimlapalli in Karimnagar district. This is a very rare and significant sculpture, which brings to light certain unknown aspects of Narasimha. The other significant feature is the rock-cut temple at Mallur in Warāṅgal district, on a hillock, surrounded by a thick forest, where there is a life-size standing image of Narasimha with lion's head and human body having fierce eyes and puffed up cheeks. He is in Ugrarupa (awful form). This is also a very rare sculpture. There is a scope to look into these matters and bring out the growth and the development of the cult of Narasimha in Telāṅgāṇa.

b) Literary Sources.

Literary works, right from the Vedas to the modern times, including the Śthala purāṇās on record, constitute the second source. The earliest-reference to Narasimha is in an invocation to Him in the Taṭṭirīya Āraṇyaka, where He is

described as "possessing sharp claws and fangs".⁸⁵ A passage of the late Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata mentions the four avatārās of Varāha, Nara-simha, vamaṇa and Mānuṣa.⁸⁶ Philosophy, religious beliefs and practices, modes of worship and many other matters of social and political thought are preserved in the extant puranic texts. We have a reference of Nara-simha in the following puranas.

- 1) Vāyu purāṇa
- 2) Brahmāṇḍa purāṇa
- 3) Viṣṇu purāṇa
- 4) Matsya purāṇa
- 5) Harivaṃṣa
- (6) Viṣṇu dharmōttara purāṇa
- 7) Nara-simha purāṇa
- 8) Kūrma purāṇa
- 9) Saura purāṇa
- 10) Bhāgavata purāṇa
- 11) Agni purāṇa
- 12) Nāradaīya purāṇa
- 13) Liṅga purāṇa and
- 14) Padma purāṇa

'Śrī Nara-simha Maṅtra' is given in the Agni purāṇa.⁸⁷ The Viṣṇu dharmōttara Purāṇa prescribes the worship of Nara-simha for removing all hindrances.⁸⁸

Next to the puranas, the works of the poets occupy an important position in preserving and perpetuating the cult of Nara-simha. In Abhigñāna Sakuntala, Kālidāsa speaks of Nara-simha as "Puruṣa Kēsari".⁸⁹

The Bhāgavata movement including the cult of Nara-simha took shape in the Tamil land, because of the Ālvārs, who were simple-hearted devotees and god-intoxicated people. The Ālvār movement attached importance only to the love of God as the means of salvation without any distinction of caste or sex. Their teachings spread like a wildfire in the nook and corner of Tamil country in general and to the north of Tamil nāḍu in particular. Consequently religion became a simple, but intense human experience. The movement of the Ālvārs is given in detail elsewhere.⁴⁰ Their simple devotion and dedication afforded a great amount of consolation to the most depressed and disappointed people. The Ālvārs, it is believed, were the 'amsavatārās' (partial incarnations) of the Lord's servants, ornaments and weapons. The Ālvārs left an indelible impression on the minds of the millions of people through their simple, but flawless devotion to the God.

The great Advaita preacher and philosopher, Saṅkarāchārya, impressed millions of people particularly, the Smārtās with his "Lakshmi Nrisimha Stōtram", written in twenty two ślōkās, invoking the help of Nārasimha, when he was in serious trouble.⁴¹ The impact of Saṅkara on the Smarta Brahmins and on others that the tradition of worship of Nara-simha is still continued by the Brahmins in particular and others in general with a notion that He comes out to their rescue, when they are critically in danger.

Following are the Telugu literary sources directly giving information about the cult in Telangana.

1. **Srimad Bhagavatam**

Bammera Pōtana had translated Sanskrit Śrīmad Bhāgavatam into Telugu. He lived during 1400-1470 A.D. and he hailed from Waraṅgal district.⁴² The story of Prah-lāda is given in Saptama Skānda of the book with reference to Narasimha.

2. Narayana Satakamu

It is believed that Pōtana also wrote Nārāyana Śata-kamu' in which he implored the god 'Dharma Puri Lakshminātha Nārāyaṇa'⁴³, who is no other than Narasimha, the incarnation of Vishṇu.

3. Narasimha Purana (Uttara bhagam):

Haribhaṭṭu wrote Narisimha Purāṇa (Uttarā bhāgam) in champu Kāvya stylē. As Errana wrote the first part of Narasimha purāṇa, he took up Uttarā bhāgam. The poet lived about 1530 A.D.⁴⁴ He dedicated his Varāha purāṇa, which is unpublished, to the village karaṇam, Kolipāka Erranāmātya of Kambammet (Khammam).⁴⁵

4. Padma Puranottara Khandam

Maḍiki Singana translated the Sanskrit Padma purā-nōtta. a khaṇḍam into Telugu in 1420 A.D. as he mentioned in his book.⁴⁶ He dedicated it to Veligaṇḍala Kaṇḍana, who was the brother of Kēsana. Kēsana was a minister of Muṣṭa Bhupāla, the Lord of Sabbimaṇḍala of Tēlaṅgāna. In it, the poet described the gifts made by Kēsana to the god Narasimha at Dharmapuri.⁴⁷

5. Simhasanadwatrimika

Koravi Gōparāju, who flourished during early period of 45th century A.D, wrote 'Simhāsanadwātrimsika' a collection of thirty two stories. He belonged to Tēlaṅgāna area.⁴⁸ There is a mention of "Limbādri Narasimha" in avatārika (preface) of his book. Limbādri Narasimha is on the hill near Bheemgal, in N zāmābād district. Nambi Limbādri, a priest of the temple of Narasimha, says that Koravigōparāju belonged to Bheemgal.⁴⁹

6. Works of Seshappa or Seshachaladasu

Sēshappa or Sēshachaladāsu belonged to the village Dharmapuri of Karīmṇagar district. He was a great devotee

of Narasimha. He wrote Nrikēsari Satakamu Narasimha Satakamu and Dharmapuri Rāmāyanamu Narasimha Satakamu was published in 1868. The line ending with every verse i.e. "Bhushana vikāsa Sri dharma puranivāsa, dushta samhāra Narasimha durita dura" is very famous throughout Āndra Pradēsh. The poet dedicated his two Satakas i.e. Nrikēsari Satakamu and Narasimha Satakamu to the god Narasimha of Dharmapuri. It is possible to think that the poet lived about 1800 A.D.⁵⁰ Prof K. Lakshminrajanam assigns him to the early period of 19th c. AD.⁵¹

7. Rohilala pata :

In the year 1858 AD. the Rōhillās plundered the village, Dharmapuri in Karīm-nagar district. Nrisimhadāsa wrote a song about 'Rōhillās' known as 'Rōhilāla pātā'. He belonged to Dharāmapuri. In it, he mentions the social conditions of the village and also the miserable plight of the victims of the depredation of the Rōhillās. Their Vandalism did not leave any thing in the village, including the temple of Narasimha. This song written by Narsimhadāsa, is in a manuscript, which is dated 1858 A.D. The manuscript is at present with S. Narahari, a resident of Dharmapuri in Karīm-nagar district.

8. Yadagirindra Satakamu :

Tiruvāi Vēnkaṭa Kavi belonged to Kolanupākāṣṇ Nalgonda district. He lived about 1840. He wrote 'Yādagirindra Śatakamu', about Narasimha of Yādagiriguṭṭa of Nalgonda district.

9. Nrisimha Vilasamu

Krishṇamā chārya was a great scholar and a poet. He wrote 'Nrisimha vilāsamu', a poetical work in Telugu describing the greatness of Narasimha and dedicated it to Rāja Surabhi Vēnkaṭa Jagannatha Rāo of Jāṭa prōlu Samsthāna, in the present Mahabūbnagar district. The poet received an 'agrahāra' from the Rāja. He lived circa 1875 A.D.⁵².

10. Śrīmannimbagiri Nṛsiṃha Śatakamu

Nambi Śrīdhar Rāo, a Madhwa brāhmin of Bheemgal, wrote 'Śrīmannimbagiri Nṛsiṃha Śatakamu' in honour of of Limbādri Narasiṃha Swāmy of Bheemgal. Nizāmābād district, in 1968. There are 108 verses in it praying Lord Narasiṃhā.

11. Śrīmad bhagavatānu Śeelanamu

Dr. Dhulipāli Śrī Rama Murti, a scholar in Telugu, wrote a book entitled "Śrīmad bhāgavatānu śeelanamu". which was published in 1972 by the author himself. He has given in it, the story of Prahlāda and the birth of Narasiṃha.

12. Śrī Yādagirīśa Stotraratnamu :

Śīṅgabhaṭṭu Narasiṃha Rāju wrote a Śatakamu by name "Śrī Yādagirīśa Stōtraratnamu". He was a rēśident of Dhulīmītṭa of Chērayāl taluk in Warangal district, He described the incarnation of Viṣṇu, as Narasiṃha in brief.

13. Maṭṭapalli Nṛsiṃha Śatakamu

The author of the book is not known. As the very-name of the book indicates, it is written in honour of Narasiṃha Swāmy of Maṭṭapalli in Nalgonda district.

14. Mss

Apart from literary references, there are several anonymous writers, who sang devotional songs in praise of Lord Narasiṃha. Some of the devotional songs are now preserved in the manuscripts of the oriental Manuscripts library in Madras⁵⁴.

15. Sthala puranas

Dr. V.G. Krishṇamāchāryulu, who worked on Sthala purānas of the Telugu country, observes that "most of the

Sthala purāṇas of the Telugu country were composed after the attempted establishment of Islām in Āndra during the 14th century. The Islam offered a threat to the religious life of the Hindus and a number of efforts were made for reviving and strengthening the Brahmanical religion. The composition of the Sthala purāṇa was one such effort⁵⁵. It is common to find in all the Sthala purāṇas a vivid description of the Kṣhētra and the sanctity of its waters. Dr. Krishṇamāchāryulu points out that the writers of the Sthalapurāṇas, written in honour of the shrines dedicated to Narasimha, tried to associate the stories written long ago in the purāṇas to places they were writing about⁵⁶. The sthala purāṇas forming a part and parcel of the tradition, have become powerful instruments for propagating faith in a particular god among the people and the cult develops and will continue for centuries together. The following are the Sthala purāṇas of different places and they are dealt with elaborately in a separate chapter while describing the centres of Narasimha worship.

1. Dharmapuri kshētra Mahātmyam, a Saṅskrit palm-leaf manuscript with 105 chapters (Brahmāṇḍa purāṇāntargatam), dated, Ś. 850. (—A.D. 928)⁵⁷.
2. Dharmapuri kshētra Mahātmyam, a Saṅskrit manuscript (Skāṇḍa purāṇāntargatam), dated 1767 A.D.⁵⁸.
3. Dharmapuri khētra Mahātmyamu, in Telugu by K. Sadāśiva Śāstri, Dharmapuri, 1956.
4. Dharmapuri kshētra Mahātmyamu, in Telugu by M. Shyāma Sundara Shāstri, Dharmapuri, Karīm-nagar district, 1970.
5. Dharmapuri kshētra Mahātmyamu, in Telugu (abridged) by K. Sadā Śiva Śāstri, Dharmapuri, Karīm-nagar district, A. P. 1979.

6. Śrī Yādagiri Kṣhetra Mahatmyamu, in Telugu by Sādhū Vēṅkata Narayana Swāmi, Yādagiriguṭṭa, 1968.
7. Yādagiri kshetra Darśini, by Gōvārdhanam Narsimha chārya, Yādagiriguṭṭa' 1978.
8. Sri Yādagiri Mahatmyam, by Gōvardhanam Narsimha Chārya, Yādagiriguṭṭa, Nalgonda district, A, P. 1979.
9. Nimbāchala Mahātmyamu. (Brahma Kaivarata purāṇāntargatam)⁵⁹. Bheemgal, Nizāmābād district, 1885.
10. Sri Maṭṭa Palli Mahatmyam, by Sri Keshava Teertha Swāmy, Maṭṭapalli, Nalgonda district.
11. Sri Arvapalli Yōgānānda Kshētramāla, Jāji reḍḍi gūḷa district 1965.
12. Stambhādri, by Kodamasimha Satyanārāyaṇā Chārya, Khammam, 1969.
13. Sri Hēmāchala Lakshmi Narsaimha Kṣētra Mahātmyamu, by Ambaṭi Vēṅkaṭappaiah, Malluru, Warāṅgal district, 1970.
14. Sthala purāṇa of Nāchāram of Medak district.⁶⁰.
15. Sthala purāṇa of Nambulādri Narasimha Swāmy, Nimmanapali, Karīmṇagar district⁶¹.

Thus, the above Sthala purāṇās, which are on record, are helpful in tracing the history of the cult of Narasimha in Telangāṇa.

c. Traditions oral & recoded and Experiences

Traditions oral and recorded experiences of the devotees recorded through personal interviews, form the third source for

material on the subject. We cannot outright reject the traditional aspect of the cult of Narasimha, just because it lacks valid reason. But it has immense power to instil faith in a particular god among the people. The tradition plays a very important role in spreading the cult moulding the behaviour of educated and uneducated people alike in accordance with the principles and practices established by their predecessors.

The traditional story of any place, where there is a temple for Lord Narasimha, is that it was the birth place of Narasimha. This is in order to create a sense of faith and devotion among the people around and also a sense of belonging.

The account of the oral tradition given in the Sthala purāṇas and by the priests, gives an idea about how the cult had spread in the past, which history could not record.

The traditional account of certain centres of Narasimha worship is given in Chapter IV. The following are the temples of Narasimha, which have the traditional account transmitted orally from generation to generation.

1. Bhaisa—Ādilābād district.
2. Koorella—Karīmīnagar district.
3. Nāmpalli—Karīmīnagar district.
4. Ratnagiri—Karīmīnagar district.
5. Narsimlapalle (Kōṭla)—Karīmīnagar district.
6. Nāgula wāncha—Khammam district.
7. Dīlālpūr—Medak district.
8. Kōnūdurg—Mahabūbnagar district.
9. Vēnkaṭāpūr—Nalgōṇḍa district.
10. Nandāpoor—Nalgōṇḍa district.
11. Peddireddigūdem—Nalgōṇḍa district.

12. Chakkāpūr—Nizāmābād district.
13. Kommāla—Warāṅgal district.
14. Narsimlapēṭ—Warāṅgal district.
15. Vēlupukōṇḍa (Zafargadh)—Warāṅgal district.
16. Koḍavaṭaṅcha—Warāṅgal district.
17. Ingurti—Warāṅgal district and
18. Kāṇḍikōṇḍa—Warāṅgal district.

Lord Narsimha is worshipped at the following places also. The deity has no fixed form. Yet people worship him following a hoary tradition, as per the survey made by the author.

- (a) Sīṅgawaṭnam (Sīṅgōṭam)—Mahabūbnagar district.
- (b) Wanaparti—Mahabūbnagar district.
- (b) Geesugōṇḍa—Warāṅgal district and
- (d) Sangāreddi—Medak district.

Faith transcends reason. Even though it is a formless image, people believe it as the deity of Lord Narsimha. This kind of deity is found in the Narsing bhānu temple, at Sipliganj, in Hyderābād city. The stone is decorated with "Sīṇḍūram" (red lead). It is firmly believed that this stone is the form of Lord Narasimha Swāmy.

At the following places also Lord Narasimha is worshipped and the deity is identified with "three nāmās" on a loose stone or on the rock of a hillock or a hill. There are no well-defined images carved in stone as at other places.

1. Mustākpura—Hyderābād district.
2. Yelgāṇḍal—Karīmṇagar district.
3. Cnērlāpūr—Karīmṇagar district.
4. Taṅgaḷḷapalli—Karīmṇagar district.

5. **Khammam (hill)—Khammam district.**
6. **Maganūr—Mahabūbnagar district.**
7. **Ārmoor—Nizāmābād district and**
8. **Pālakurti—Warāṅgal district.**

Tradition, being accumulated through the centuries, has a strong hold on the people. The common man, who is unable to go through the scriptures of Hinduism, has faith in his "Āchāryās" or gurus, who preach the 'Dharma' and he believes them without a word of protest.

Experiences of the devotees :

The experiences of the devotees have much to do with growth of the cult of Narasimha. The experience of some devotees have an impact on other devotees, whether those experiences are reasonable or not. It is faith that counts more than reason. It is the impulse that creates a favourable and devotional sentiment in the heart of a devotee.

Information has been gathered from interviewing the devotees at the following centres of Narasimha worship in Telangāṇa, regarding their experiences.

1. **Yādagiriguṭṭa—Nalgondā district.**
2. **Nāchāram—Medak district.**
3. **Dharmapuri—Karīmṇagar district.**
4. **Maṭṭapalli—Nalgondā district.**
5. **Kodavaṭaṅcha—Warāṅgal district.**
6. **Chukkāpūr—Nizāmābād district.**
7. **Bheemgal—Nizāmābād district.**
8. **Malluru—Warāṅgal district and**
9. **Arvapalli—Nalgondā district.**

The interviews held with different devotees at the above centres, reveal the following features.

1. It is a general belief that the desires of the devotees after the 'darśan' of the Lord are fulfilled. Again they pay their respects to the Lord and fulfil their vows to the Lord. There is a tradition at Nāchāram temple of Medak district that grief stricken people hang a cocoanut after performing 'puja', tie it to the roof of iron-bars in the 'maṇṭapa' on the back side of the temple. When their desires are fulfilled, they visit the temple and break that cocoanut and fulfil their vows to the Lord in cash and kind.

2. It is a belief prevalent among the local and the distant people that incurable diseases will be cured here and evil-spirits, which haunt the people are driven out by the grace of the Lord, if they stay here for some time praying the Lord.

3. The devotees visit the temple as their family God as tradition goes to say once in a year atleast and fulfil their vows to the Lord, though they visit other temples, which are more popular.

4. People visit the temple for performing the important functions of their sons or daughters, in the presence of the Lord in the hope that He removes all obstacles and bestows peace and prosperity upon those people.

5. Childless people visit the temple and obtain children by the grace of Lord Narasimha, if they eat the sandal paste from the navel of the Lord at Mulluru, Waraṅgal district⁶².

Smt. Komaramma is a staunch devotee of Lord Narsimha at Yādagirigutta of Nalgonda district⁶³. She recovered from some serious illness by the grace of the Lord in the year 1954. Since then, she has been residing there at the temple site worshipping the Lord. Today she has a large number of followers, who respect her as their spiritual mother. She has much influence on her followers. Every day a number of

people after visiting the Lord, approach her to gain her favour to succeed in their endeavours as she was blessed by the Lord.⁶⁴

Thus the experiences of the devotees are valuable in spreading the cult of Lord Narasimha. The very popularity of the shrines from time to time reflects the greatness of the Lord in fulfilling the desires of the devotees and in turn, it increases the flow of the devotees visiting the temples. If we want to know the pulse of the people visiting the shrines and to assess the impact of the cult on the devotees, personal interviews with the devotees are necessary. The experiences of the devotees help to shape, inspire and sustain the cult of Narasimha and they form one of the important sources for tracing and constructing the history of the cult of Narasimha in Telangāna.

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CHAPTER-II

THE CULT OF NARASIMHA

It is firmly believed that Vēdas are divine revelation, not composed by any individual. They are the spring of faith and source of strength to all Hindus. In the Rigvēda Vishnu was only one aspect of the sun-god,¹ who occupied a subordinate position in the Rigvēda, but was destined to achieve great importance later on. The Maitrāyaṇi Samhita of the Yajurveda mentions gāyatrīs of Vishṇu and Nārāyaṇa.²

It was only in the age of the Brāhmaṇās, that Vishṇu came to occupy an exalted position. The greatness of Vishṇu is fully brought out in Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa, which declares that "he occupies the highest place among the gods".³

The worship of the Avatāras of Vishṇu is an important feature of Hinduism. The well known term, incarnation, or 'avatāra' literally means 'descent' or 'coming down'. The germ of the avatāra concept is to be traced back to the later Vēdic literature. The earliest reference to Narasimha is given in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. In it, the earth is said to have been raised from the waters by a black boar with a hundred arms.⁴ This work also alludes to Nrisimha or Man-lion. He is invoked and described as "possessing sharp claws and fangs".⁵ Similarly the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa mentions that Prajāpati took the form of a tortoise.⁶ In the Mahā Nārāyaṇa Upanishad, assigned by competent scholars to the third century B.C.,⁷ the Gāyatri mantra of Narasimha is given.⁸ We have also a mantra of Narasimha in Nrisimha pūrvatāpinyupanishatu⁹ and Nrisimhōttara tāpinyupanishatu.¹⁰

The theory of 'Avatara' presents a stage of development

in the Mahābhārata. The earlier sections of the epic do not contain any list of the incarnations. A passage of the late Nārāyaṇa section of the Mahābhārata mentions only four Avatāras i.e., Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana and Mānuṣha (Vāsudēva Kṛṣṇa) to protect the world.¹¹

Another passage of the same section adds to the list the names of the deified heroes, Rāmā-Bhārgava and Rāmā-Dāśarathi,¹² while in the third passage, a list of ten incarnations is offered by adding Hamsa, Kūrma, Matsya and Kalki (Kalkin).¹³ There is a brief story of Narasiṃha in the Moksha Dharma of Mahābhārata. Bhagavadgīta, which contains an early exposition of this theory, clearly states the purpose of incarnation of Viṣṇu, like this.¹⁴ "For the protection of the virtuous and the destruction of the wicked and for the reestablishment of dharma, I appear age after age."

Traditions regarding the number of 'Avatāras' vary and the later lists of the ten 'avatāra', some times, adhered to 19, 22 and 39 'Vibhavās' or manifestations of the Supreme Being. But Viṣṇu is usually said to have ten major incarnations. They are :

1. Matsya (Fish)
2. Kūrma (Tortoise)
3. Varāha (Boar)
4. Narasiṃhā (Man-lion)
5. Vāmana (Dwarf)
6. Paraśu-Rāmā (Rāmā with axe)
7. Rāmā (Ramachandra)
8. Kṛṣṇa
9. Buddha and
10. Kaliki (yet to come)

It is held that the standard list of the ten incarnations did not find general acceptance before the eight century AD.¹⁵

According to tradition, there are four yugas (ages). They are Kṛitāyuga, Trētāyuga, Dwāpāra yuga and Kaliyuga. The first yuga i.e., Kṛitā yuga witnessed the five incarnations of Viṣṇu. They were Matsya (Fish), Kūrma (Tortoise), Varāha (Boar), Narasimha (Man-lion) and Vāmana (Dwarf).

We have a reference to the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in 'Gāthā Saptasati,' attributed to Hāla, a king of the Śātavāhanās, who compiled it. Varāha,¹⁶ Śrīhari¹⁷ and Kṛishṇa¹⁸ are mentioned in it. Although, the number of primary incarnations of Viṣṇu appears to have been fixed quite at ten, their names vary in the list given in the early purāṇas.¹⁹

The Vāyu purāṇa mentions three divine avatāras viz: Nārāyaṇa, Narasimha and Vāmana and Seven human avatāras i.e., Dattātrēya, Māndhātā, Jamadagnya (Rāma), Rāma (Dāśarathi), Vēda Vyāsa, Kṛishṇa and Kalki.²⁰ Matsya purāṇa is one of the three oldest purāṇas, the other two being Brahmanḍa and Vāyu. It also gives a list of ten incarnations, It describes the first three as 'divya Sambhūtis' (divine incarnations) and the rest as human incarnations. The name of Buddha replaces that of Kṛishṇa.²¹ In the list given in the Brahmanḍa purāṇa figure Narasimha, Vāmana and the others.²² In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the horse is placed in the list of 'Avatāras' of Viṣṇu in the place of Dwarf. It is Aśvavatāra (Avatāra of Horse).²³ The Harivamśa quotes another list of ten incarnations omitting Matsya, Kūrma, one of the Rāmas and Buddha, to make room for Pauṣkaraka, Datta, Kēśava and Vyāsa.²⁴

The Viṣṇu dharmōttara purāṇa mentions an interesting thing. It places the Man-lion incarnation in the Madra country.²⁵ Raychaudhuri says that the Mādrakās were a people living in the Central Puñjāb with their capital as Siālkoṭ.²⁶ Till now the worship of Narasimha is very popular in Puñjāb, especially in the kāngra district, Men and Women worship this god in the form of a sacred cocoanut on every sunday.²⁷ This Purāṇā is assigned to the period of 400-500 AD.²⁸ There are no less

than four lists of the 'Avatāras' in Bhāgavata purāṇa.²⁹ One of these lists mentions twenty two incarnations of Viṣṇu,³⁰ including Narasimha and Varāha. The agni purāṇa describes only ten Avatārās including Narasimha, Buddha and Kalki.³¹

The Varāha purāṇa also gives a list of ten incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu.³² Further the Garuda purāṇa mentions nineteen Avatārās (called mūrṭis), Narasimha, being the fourth in the list.³³ The number of incarnations is increased in the Pancarātra work. Ahirbḍhṇya Samhita, which mentions thirty nine 'Vibhavas' or manifestations of the Supreme Being, includes almost all the well-known Avatārās.³⁴ But Jayadēva of Eastern India (C-1200 AD) in his book entitled 'Gītā Gōvinda' eulogizes Kṛiṣṇa as Viṣṇu himself and sings in praise of his ten Avatārās.³⁵

Later Viṣṇava literature recognised three kinds of Avatārās Viz;³⁶

- a) Pūrṇāvatāra (complete incarnation)
- b) Amsāvatāra (incarnation of a portion of the power of a divine being) and
- c) Āvēsa (Partial incarnation of a more or less temporary character)

The popularity of the worship of several 'Avatārās' is attested to by the Indian epigraphic records of the period between the 4th and 8th centuries AD.³⁷

With the increasing popularity of incarnations, the Vyūha concept receded more into the background. Ahirbḍhṇya Samhita which is one of the earliest Pancarātra work, assignable to a date earlier than the eighth century AD,³⁸ recognises to a the five fold forms of the God.³⁹ They are:

- a) Para (Transcendent)

b) Vyāha (Emanatory i.e., Vāsudēva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha)

c) Vibhava (Incarnatory)

d) Āntaryāmin (Immanent) and

e) Arca (That which resides in idols and images in the temples and houses like Svayam vyakta, Divya, Saiddha, Ārṣa, Mānuṣa and Grihārca).

It is clear from the Mahābhārata itself that Vāsudēva was a hero of the Vṛṣṇi race. He must have been deified later on and was worshipped together with his brother and sons, forming originally a group of five.⁴⁰ Vāsudēva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sāmba were heroes of the Vṛṣṇi race, later on deified. This proposition has been justified by the archaeological evidences. The most interesting of all is the Mōra well inscription, which stands as an evidence for the prevalence of the worship of the images of the Pañchavīras (five heroes), installed in a temple as early as the first century B.C.

“Bhagavatam Vṛṣṇīnām

Pañcha vīrānām Pratimaha”.⁴¹

This type of worship of Pañchavīras along with Viṣṇu in the form of Nṛsiṁha became popular in coastal Āṇḍhra during the early period of the 4th century.⁴² As such, this sculptured form showing Viṣṇu in the form of Nārasiṁha in an anthropomorphic form, combining human and animal features, is perhaps the first and the earliest of its kind.

The cult prevailed in the early period of the Christian Era. It is attested by the epigraphical evidence. We have in early inscriptions names like Siḥadatta (Siṁha datta 'dedicated to the lion or man-lion forms of Viṣṇu) and Siḥa rakṣita (Siṁha rakṣita, protected by the Siṁha or Nārasiṁha incarnation) in the prakṛit inscriptions of the first and second centuries AD, from Sāñchi, Mathura and other places.⁴³ In the South, most

of the early pāllavas were devotees of Vishnu as indicated by their very names. Names like Simha Varman (one whose protector is the lion or Man-lion), Simha Vishnu (Vishnu in the form of the lion or Man-lion) and Narasimha Varman (one whose protector is the Man-lion) were popular kings in the pallava dynasty of South India.⁴⁴ The earliest such name in the family of the pallava kings is that of Siha Vamma (Simha Varman) of the Mañchikallu (Guntur district A.P.) inscription, assigned to the fourth century AD.⁴⁵

There is a panel containing the image of Narasimha, which was discovered at Pedamuḍiyam in Cuddapah district, belonging to the 6th c. AD,⁴⁶

Narasimha Varman I, also called Narasimha Vishnu, was the greatest of the Pallava kings, who flourished in C. 630-668 AD.⁴⁷ Sewell enumerates no less than forty kings of the early and medieval periods, who bore the name of Narasimha.⁴⁸ Most of these rulers flourished in South India. One distinguished king from the North in the said list was Narasimha Gupta Bāḷāditya of Gupta dynasty of Magadha, who reigned in the later part of the 5th or first quarter of 6th C. AD.⁴⁹ The seals of the Gupta period attest that the Gupta kings patronised Narasimha worship. The early representation of Narasimha incarnation is executed on a seal found at Basarh,⁵⁰ datable to the Gupta period.⁵¹ Further we have reference to Narasimha on the coins of Kumāra Gupta. The legend reads:

“Sākshādiva Narasimho

Simha Mahēndrō Jayatyanisam”⁵²

“The lion (among men) - Mahēndra is, as it were, Narasimha incarnate”.

The exaltation of the king as an incarnation of the god, Narasimha, is obvious. An image hailing from Pahlejpur, about a half mile from the present Eran village, is lying in a shrine dedicated to Nrisimha.⁵³ The Gwālior Museum has

also a similar Narasimha image found at Besnagar, belonging to the Gupta period.⁶⁴ It is also a two handed image, supporting a thickly maned lion-head on a standing human body. The number of Nrisimha images found from the Gupta period is itself a testimony to the prevalence of Narasimha cult in that period. The sculptural representations of Narasimha are also found in different periods of history. Some early images of Narasimha together with the Varāha (Boar) and Vāmana (Dwarf) forms of Vishṇu are found in the rock-cut temples at Udayagiri, Bādāmi and Mamallāpuram belonging to the Gupta, Early Chālukya and Pallava periods respectively.⁶⁵

Among the medieval kings of the other parts of the country, who were devoted to Narasimha, was king Lakshmaṇa Sēna of Eastern India. He is described in the epigraphic records of the Sēna dynasty particularly as 'parama Narasimha'.⁶⁶

Thus, this cult was popular, patronised by the kings in ancient and medieval periods alike.

After the purāṇas, the works of the poets occupy a predominant position in preserving and perpetuating the cult of Narasimha.

The next important stage in the developement of the cult of Narasimha is due to Bhāgavata movement by the Āḷvārs and Āchāryās.

Movement of the Alvars

The Vaishṇava Āḷvārs were simple hearted devotees. They played a very important role in shaping the religious life of the people of the South. They describe the exploits of God in His several incarnations. Religion became for them a simple, but profound human experience.

The word 'āḷvār' has been explained as 'one in deep wisdom'. The āḷvārs were wise sages, who exercised a spi-

ritual sovereignty over the hearts of men. The movement of the Āļvārs attached importance only to the love of God as the means of salvation, irrespective of caste or sex.

There is a controversy over the chronology of the Āļvārs. They belonged to the Pallava period in the main and have to be assigned to the period from the 7th Century to the close of the 8th and the first years of ninth century.⁵⁷ But Prof. K.R. Srinivās Iyengār slightly differing with their period, says that the Āļvārs in all probability flourished in the period marked by the extreme limits of AD 500-800.⁵⁸ Out of twelve Āļvārs, only eight praised and worshipped Lord Narasimha. They are :

1. Pōygai (Sāra yōgi)
2. Pūtattār (Bhūta yōgin)
3. Pēy Āļvār (Mahad yōgin)
4. Tirumālisai (Bhakti sāra)
5. Nammaļvār (Saṭha kōpa, Parāṅkuṣār)
6. Periyāļvār (Vishṇu chitta)
7. Tiruppān (Yōgi vāhana) and
8. Tirumaṅgai (Parakāla)

It is believed that the first three Āļvārs lived in the first half of the eighth century.⁵⁹ But according to D.C. Sircar, the 'āļvārs' may be roughly placed between the 6th and 9th centuries AD.⁶⁰

1. Poygai Alvar

He hails from Kañchi in Tamiḷnāḍu and is known as Kāsarayōgi, Sarōmunīndrar and Poykaiār. We have a reference to Narasimha in 'Mutal Tiru Vāṇḍāḍi,' which was written by Pōygai Āļvār. It is a part of 'Iyarpa', which is a collection of a thousand pasurās by Āļvārs.

"Iranfiya naippun niraṇḍavallu kirār"⁶¹

"One who is capable of making the ulcer full of Hiranya Kasipu".

2. Putattar

He belonged to Tondamaṇḍalam. He praises the Man-
tion (Narasimha), the incarnation of Viṣṇu in his book,
“Ireṇḍam Tiruvaṇḍāḍi” as “Siṅgamāye”.⁶²

3. Pey Alvar

‘Munṇam Tiruvaṇḍāḍi’ of Pēy Ālvār records the story of
the deſt uction of Hiranya Kaſipu along with other ſto-
ries of God. He aefers to Narasimha as “Siṅgamāye”.⁶³

“Being made himſelf of the body of the lion”.

4. Tirumaliſai Alvar

He was born at a village, by name Tirumāliſai in Ton-
maṇḍalam. He was, therefore, known as the Ālvār of Tiru-
māliſai. He was the diſciple of Pēy Ālvār. He wrote two
books. They are “Nanmukhan Tiruvaṇḍāḍi” and “Tiruch-
chaṇḍa Viruttam”. He is regarded by ſome as a contemporary
of Pallava Mahēndra Varma I (C.600-630 AD).⁶⁴

We find the reference to Narasimha in Nanmukhan
Tiruvaṇḍāḍi in the verſes of 5 and 18.

“Thou, who deſtroyeſt Hiranya Kaſipu in a day’ art alſo
has been the Being, who creatad gods, men animals and plants”.
(V.5). In the ſame book the Ālvār called Narasimha as “Ariy-
ūru Vomāi”.⁶⁵ “One who bore the body of a lion”.

We have ſome ſome references to Narasimha in “Tiruchcha-
ṇḍa Viruttam,” in the verſes of 23-25 and 63. The Ālvār called
Narasimha as “Siṅgamāya Dēvadēva”.⁶⁶

5. Namalvar

The next Ālvār, who is affectionately called ſo is Nammalvār
(our Saint). He was recognised as the Kulapati (Founder Seer) of
Śrīvaiſṇava theology. He was alſo a great myſtic and god-intoxi-
cated man. Nammālvar was a maid rept in devotion to her
beloſed, Lord Viṣṇu.⁶⁷ Failing to get a glimpse of her Lord
any where, the Nāyaki prays eloud to ‘Narasimha’. Why ſhould
the Nāyaki call the Narasimha? It is He, the Narasimha, who

remained unchanged with Lakshmi, eve by the side, wondrous in His beauty.⁶⁸ He wrote "Tiruvōymozhi" and other poems. The great Vēdānta Dēśika calls the "Tiruvōymozhi," as the "Drāvidōpanishad. He wrote eleven pāsūrās in honour of Narasimha and he called him "Narasīṅga"⁶⁹ which also means 'man-lion'.

6. Periyalvar

He hails from grī Villi Puttūr. His most famous song is Tiruppallāṇḍu⁷⁰ (Blessed for many years). This song is sung individually or collectively by the Vaiṣṇavās every day in the temples.

In it, he says, "Myself, my father 'his father and his grand father for seven generations have been doing all services continuously to Him, who in the hour (star of) Tiruvōnam (Sraṇam), when the Āsuras were strong, slew the foe in the form of Man lion and we shall sing to our hearts content, 'Eternal life for thousand years to God'."

We have a reference in his Tirumōḷi of Narasimha as "Narasīṅganai".⁷¹ Here he praised Narasimha, who rushed to rescue His devotee, Prahlada' from the demon Hiranyakasipu. The Āḷvār also Praised those who saluted God Narasimha and sang the glory of Him. It is believed that he was rewarded by the Pāṇḍyan king Śrīmara Srivallabha (815-862 A.D.) for establishing the supremacy of Nārāyaṇa in his court.⁷²

7. Tiruppan Alvar

He was known as Yōgivāhana. He was a member of the so-called untouchable caste. But his devotion to God was so great that he asked the priest of the temple to bring Tiruppān on his shoulders to his presence. Then he broke into song song only ten pāsūrās (verses).

"Amalanāḍippiran" was the result of his culminating devotion to the Lord. He speaks of Narasimha as "Parianāgi vāṇḍa vavūṇa nudal keeṇṇa".

"One who killed his enemy, Hiranya kaśipu". In his book the Ālvār says, "The dark broad eyes, shining with red lines and with long eye lashes, have entranced me truly. O, Lord! Thou tore the body of the great asura (Hiranya Kaśipu), being the of the immortals, O 'Primal cause of all'.⁷³

8. Tirumangai Alvar

The last of the Ālvārs was Tirumangai Ālvār who belonged to the fourth caste. He was a king of Travancore.⁷⁴ He was considered to be the bow of the celestial God-head or its incarnation. The Tamil scholars fixed his period as the 8th century AD.⁷⁵ He wrote six poems, which form a logical supplement to the four prabandhās Nammālvār.

In "peria-tirumadal," one of the six poems composed by him, the Ālvār called Narasimha "Singa vēlkunnamē"; which means "One who bears the form of a lion". He wrote ten verses about Narasimha and the greatness of the Kshētra of Ahōbila.⁷⁶

The Ālvārs worshipped Vishṇu and his forms only. The great feature of the Ālvār movement is that it was emotional and it extends the fruits of religion to all sorts of people. Their path is the path of self-surrender (prapatti). It is believed that Ālvārs were the 'amsāvatārās' (partial incarnations) of the Lord's servants, ornaments and weapons. Their teachings were not limited to Tamīlnādu, where they are born, but spread to other parts of India. There is a tradition among the Vaishṇavās that they should not receive "teertham" (Sacred water) from the priest of a temple, where there is no worship of the Ālvārs. Even to this day, this tradition is scrupulously followed in the temple of Vishṇu. There is an increasing trend in visiting the temple by the people, enlightened by the sense of devotion, which the Ālvārs enunciated and preached.

Lord Narasimha occupied a pre-eminent position in the hearts of the Tamil people in particular and in other parts of the country in general, for He is known as "periya perumāḷ" or the God of gods, in Tamil language.

Sankara Charya (788-820 AD)

Sankaracharya was a great preacher and philosopher. The date of this great teacher is a matter of controversy. Meadonell and Keith think that he lived about 750 AD. But K.A. Nilakanṭha Sāstri assigns him to the period of 788-820 AD.⁷⁷ it is said that 'Lakshmi Nrisimha Sthōtram' was written by Sri Sankara Bhāgavat pāda in twenty two verses (ślōkās) in Sanskrit, when he was in serious trouble. Sankarāchārya was not averse to the worship of Viṣṇu. This tradition of his worship of Narasimha is still continued by the Smārṭās, though they normally worship Siva.

Ramanuja Charya (1017-1137) AD

After Sankarāchārya, Rāmānujachārya propagated this cult along with Vaishṇavism.

It is traditionally believed that the great Vaishṇava Ācharya, Rāmānujachārya, lived for a full span of 120 years. His contribution to the Indian Philosophy is 'Visisṭhādvaitam'. In his worship of Narasimha, he refers to Narasimha as "one who assassinated Hiranya kasipu",⁷⁸ When Rāmānujā was on tour to spread the gospel of Śrīvaishṇavism, he went to Mithila (Sāla grāma) and there he visited the temple of Yōgānānda Narasimha Swāmy. There he performed a 'hōma' (fire-sacrifice) for Narasimha Swāmy.⁷⁹

Rāmānuja is worshipped as an incarnation of 'śēsha' in all the Viṣṇu temples along with the Āḷvārs.

The successors of Rāmānujā Chārya, like Kurukēsa, Viṣṇuchitta (Engal Āḷvār), Varadacharya, (Nādadur Ammāl), Atrēya Rāmānuja (Appilar), Vēdāṇṭa Dēsika (1290-1370), Varadāchārya (Nainār), Brahma tantra Svatantra, Prativādi bhayaṅkara Anna, Ādivan Saṭha kōpa Swāmy, the founder of Ahōbila Maṭh in 1398 A.D. Srinivāsa, Raṅganātha and Vēdāṇṭa Rāmānuja (the munitraya Sāmpradāya, technically called Svayamāchāryās), Embar, Parāsara Bhaṭṭa, Nanḷiyar.

Nāmpillai, Krishṇapāda (Vadaku tiruviḍi pillai), Pillai Iṭṭichārya, Sṛīśailēsa, Vara vara Muni (Aḷagiyammanavāla), and Maṇavāla, who died in 1456 AD, spread Vaishṇavism in the South India. It was a movement based upon the language of the people, which flourished quickly far and wide. Along with Vaishṇavism, the cult of Narasimha, also spread in the South.

Historically we find that king Gaṇapatideva of Kākatyās patronised this cult,⁸⁰ along with the other sects of Hinduism. After the fall of the Kākatyās, the Muslim rule lasted for a short period. Then after, this area went under the control of Musunūri and Rēcherla Chiefs. It was during this period that the restoration and revival of Hinduism started. The cult of Narasimha also spread accordingly. We have a record of its existence in the first part of the 15th century AD.⁸¹ The reign of Krishna dēvarāya is famous for the revival of Hinduism and for patronising art and letters in the South. He encouraged all faiths, including Vaishṇavism, which he professed. We have a reference to this cult during his reign.⁸² After Krishnadēvarāya, the Velama chiefs also patronised his cult.⁸³ Some of the Qutb Shāhi Sultans of Gōlkoṇḍa, viz. Mohd. Quli Qutb Shāh,⁸⁴ Abdulla Qutb Shāh⁸⁵ and Abul Hasan (Tānāsha)⁸⁶ were not averse to encouraging this cult, though they professed 'Islam' as their religion.⁸⁴ After the fall of Gōlkoṇḍa in 1687, Amraṅgzēb followed vigorously the policy of religious aggrandisement against the Hindus. His subordinate Rustum-dilkhān, the Subēdār of Hyderābād, had converted the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy at Dharmapuri, in Karīmnaḡār district into a mosque in 1693 AD.⁸⁷ After the defeat of Mubārizkhān by Nizāmūlmulk in 1724, the Deccan was under the rule of Āsaf Jahi dynasty from 1724-1948 AD.⁸⁸ There was no development of Hindu religion during this period and there was no initiative on the part of the Nawābs to develop the temples or to establish new ones. After the dawn of independence, there is a tremendous growth of Hinduism; Com-

munications and transport to religious places and with the increase of literature relating to religious matters, the cult of Narasimha is increasingly becoming popular in the Telangāna, Āndhra and Rāyalaseema regions of Āndhra Pradesh,

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CHAPTER-III

HISTORY OF THE CULT OF NARASIMHA IN TELANGANA

The earliest temple of Narasimha in Telangana, according to my survey, is at Vādapalli in Nalgonda district. It is assignable to circa 7th Century A-D.¹ There is a short inscription in Kannada, engraved on a stone pillar in the maṇṭapa of the Narasimha temple- This is the earliest available inscription relating to the cult of Narasimha in Telangana. We have no information regarding the temples of Narasimha during 8-9th Century A.D., except a relief sculpnure of Narasimha and Hiraṇya Kasipu on the Southern wall of the Visva Brahma temple at Ālāmpūr, which is built by the Chāḷukyās as Bādāmi during 7-8th Century A.D. But there was a temple dedicated to Narasimha at Dharmapuri in Karīmṇagar district, constructed in the first part of the 10th Century A.D., as attested by a palm-leaf manuscript in Sanskrit, known as Dharmapuri Kshētra Maharmyam in 3,500 ślōkās, which is at present with Jagannathā Chāryulu.² At the end of the MS, is found the year S.850, which is equalent to 928 AD. There is no available evidence for cultus activity after that, till the last decade of the eleventh century. In S.1015 (= 1093 AD) Chākamma, the daughter of Talāri Brahmaya Nāyaka, renovated the old temple of Narasimha Swāmy at Ālāmpūr in Mahabubnagar district. An inscription, dated S 1015 on the maṇṭapapillar beside the Narasimha temple,³ records a gift of land by this Chākamma to Mādhava Devara (present Narasimha Swāmy) in the presence of Nāga dēva Nāyaka, a Pratiḥārī of Mahāmaṇḍalēshwara Halla Varasu king of Puḍur and vassal of Tribhuvanamalla. After a short span of 22 years, there is a reference to Narasimha in an inscription engraved on four sides of a black granite, found in front of the temple of Brahmēshwara in the village Peddākadumur of

Mahabubnagar district, belonging to Gōkarṇa Maharaja, dated C.V.E.40, corresponding to AD 1115; It begins with prayers to Dēvatas and Dasāvātārās, the ten incarnations of God. It registers Charities made by Saudhara Bollaya Nāyaka to different gods, including Narasimha, during the reign of Gōkarṇa.⁴ Belonging to the same century is an inscription dated S.1100 (AD 1178) on a stone pillar in the Hanuman Shrine, facing Lord Narasimha.⁵ It records the gift of two villages Mamillapalli and Manchikunṭa to Nrisimha by two brothers, Bhīma and Gōkarṇa, sons of Udayāditya and grand sons of Gōkarṇa I of the dynasty of Karikāla Chōḍa. Gifts of lands or villages to the temples was a common tradition in those days, which is attested by an unpublished inscription on a slab of stone, dated S.1124 (1202 AD) which was found at Chintāmanitank near the village Yelgaṇḍal in Karīmṇagar district.⁶ It records the gift of lands to Veligaṇḍula Lakshmī Narasimha dēvara for His aṅga-raṅga bhōgās and to the temple orchestra (Sonnāivāru) by the Subordinate of Kākati Gaṇapati dēva, Chaṇḍa preggada, son of Kāṭayāmātya of Malyāla dynasty and general of Kākati Gaṇapati dēva. When Kākatiya Gaṇapadidēva Mahārāja was ruling from Orugallu as his capital. Gōna Ganapayya, son of Buddhireḍḍi of the Caturtha Kula, was stated to have obtained by the grace of his sovereign Kaṇḍuri-ṇāḍu, which he was governing from Vardhamānapuram in Mahabubnagar district. An inscription in Telugu from Vardhamānapuram records the consecration of Sṛī Lakshmī Narasimha Nārāyaṇa dēvara by Bhīmadēva Peggada, the Sṛī Karṇa of Ganapayya, and son of Gōna Buddhī Reddi in the year Svābhānu, Saka year 1145 (1223 AD). He also gave 3 ma measured by a pole of twenty two spans behind Surasamudramu to the east of Vaddamānu to god Narasimha dēvara.⁷ After this, the progress of the cult of Narasimha appears to have been effected owing to several causes, the chief of them being Muslim invasion. The Muslims spread their barbarous and cruel activities by massacring the people regardless of age and sex and by converting the captured soldiers and the people forcibly into Islam and destroying the Hindu temples and defacing the images of the Hindu pantheon. After the fall of the

Kākattiyās, the Muslim rule lasted for a short spell of thirteen years. Thereafter this area went under the control of Musunuri and Rācherla chiefs. It was during these periods that the revival of Hinduism started. So was the cult of Narasimha.

But during 13-14th century, we have a reference to the cult of Narasimha in Telugu literature. Krishnamā Chārya wrote "Simha giri Vachanamulu" in prose, who lived in the last part of the thirteenth century.⁸ In it, he described the qualities and the greatness of Simhādri Nrisimha. Errā-pragaḍa, one of the three famous poets (Kavitrāyam), who translated Mahābhārata into Telugu, flourished during 1324-49. He wrote "Narasimha purāṇa" and dedicated it to Lord Ahōbila Nrisimha Swamy.⁹

Again we have a couple of epigraphic evidences of the cult during the 15th Century. There is an inscription on a pillar in Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy's temple at Ingurty in waraṅgal district. It states that a certain Mañtrirāju Timmarāju nad the temple (nagaru) and mañtapa constructed for Śrī Narasimha, the Lord of Lakshmī of (Ingurti) on Thursday, Śu.10 of Śrāvana in the year Manmatha, S. 1337 (A.D.1415).¹⁰ The other epigraphic evidence is from the hillock of Narasimla pēṭa in waraṅgal district, known as Dēvunigutta. It records that a certain Krishnā Charyā excavated a tank at 'Nrisimhā Chala' in Taṭṭipalli for the ablutions of the Brāhmins in S.1359 Piṅga'a (AD 1437-38).¹¹ There is only Narasimha Swāmy's temple on the hillock near the village. The hillock, known as Dēvunigutta, (the gods hill) is therefore called (Nrisimhāchala (Nrisimha's hill), which is mentioned in the inscription. Hence Narsimla-pēṭa with its hillock may be identified with Nrisimhachala of the inscription,

Besides the epigraphic evidences, we have a few literary works, which speak of the cult of Narasimha in the 15th century.

One of the famous poets, Bammera Pōṭana, who translated Sanskrit Mahābhāgavatam into Telugu, lived during 1400-

1490 A.D. in Warangal district.¹² The village Bammera is about three kilometres from Palakurtti, a well known centre of Hari-Hara in the Warangal district. The story of Prahlāda, where Lord Narasimha appears, is given in Saptama Skānda of the book. The other poet, Maḍiki Siṅgana translated the Sanskrit 'padma Parānōttara khaṇḍam' into Telugu in 1420 A.D., as he mentioned in his book.¹³ He dedicated it to Veligāṇḍala Kāṇḍana, who was the brother of Kēsana was a minister of Muppa Bhupāla, the Lord of Sabbimaṇḍala of Tēlaṅgāna. The other great author, Koravi Goparāju, who flourished during the early period of 15th C., wrote "Simhasanadwātrimśika" a collection of thirty two stories. He belonged to Tēlaṅgāna arēa,¹⁴ There is a mention of "Limbādri Narasimha" in the avatārika (preface) of his book. Limbādri Narasimha Swāmy is on a hillock near Bhoemgal in Nizāmābād district. Śrīnātha, a contemporary of Pōtana describes a festive gathering at Simhāchalam, in his book, "Simhadri Tirunaḷḷu". He served peda Kōmaṭi Vēma (1402-1420 A.D.) of Kōṇḍa vīḍu kingdom and later on Virabhadra Reddy (1423-34 A.D.) of Rāja Mahēndra kingdom. He lived during 1385-1455 A.D.¹⁵ Tallapāka Annamā Charya (1424-1503), a famous composer, was the first man, who wrote devotional songs in Telugu.¹⁶ He described the birth of Sri Narasimha Swāmy in his 'Saṅkērtanās' (devotional songs).¹⁷

There are two 16th century inscriptions regarding the temples of Narasimha. The first one is on the maṇṭapa-pillar, beside the Narasimha temple at Ālāmpur in Mahabubnagar district. It refers to the reign of the Vijayanagara king Vira Krishna rāya. It is dated Saka 1443, which corresponds to A.D. 1521.¹⁸ The Charter registers the endowment of the village Bayarapura to Lord Yōgānāṇḍa Narasimha by Gaurāḍa Nāyaka Basavapayya for the spiritual prosperity of the king and the merit of Gauravada nāyaka. Following this gift, the village was renamed 'Narasimha pura'. It is stated that the 'Ālāmpur Sīma' was granted as 'nāyankara' to Gaurada nāyaka Basavayya after the king Krishṇadēvarāya had victoriously completed the northern 'digvijaya' and captured Rāichur.

The other inscription is on a pillar of the *mandapa* of Narasimha Swāmy in the Brahma Pushkarinī, belonging to the period of Velama chief, Jupallī Dharmarāya. It is dated 1567 A. D. 19. It records the construction by certain Tirmakṛtya of the compound wall around the Pushkarinī and the *mandapa* on the Vēdika (Platform), which was formerly constructed by Jupallī Dharmarāya. The latter is also stated to have built the steps around the Brahma Pushkarinī at Dharmapuri.

The sixteenth century witnessed a good deal of literary activity. Many great poets of this period have immortalised Lord Narasimha in their literary works. Śrī Krishṇa dēvarāya (1509–1529 A. D.), the great king and poet of Vijayanagara, mentions his visit to Simhādri and describes Lord Narasimha as “dambha kēsari” (the angry lion) in his ‘Amuktamālyada.’²⁰ Next, Haribhaṭṭu translated the *uttarā bhāgam* of Sanskrit Nrisimha purāṇa into Telugu. He lived about 1530 A. D.²¹ Another poet of no mean fame, Vennelakaṇṭi Surana, translated the first part of Sanskrit Viṣṇu purāṇa in to Telugu, in which he described the incarnations of Viṣṇu including Narasimha. It is said that he lived in the first part of 16th century.²² Another renowned poet, Piṅgali Surana, wrote “Kaṣāpurṇōdayam” and dedicated it to Nāṇḍyāla Krishṇarāju, who was a feudatory to the Vijayanagar king. Vīrēśalingam paṇṭulu thinks that as Krishṇarāju belonged to about 1560 A. D, Piṅgali Surana also belonged to the same date.²³ In it, he mentions Narasimha as ‘Simhāchaladhīsa, while describing the pilgrimages of Maṇikāndara.²⁴ Further he also mentions Dharmapuri, where the temple of Narasimha existed.²⁵ Tenāli Rāmakrishṇa, who lived about the last quarter of the 16th century,²⁶ wrote Śrī Ghatikāchala Mahātmyam, in which he described the birth of Nrasimha at Ghatikāchala, which is one of the 108 centres of Vaiṣṇava pilgrimage in India.²⁷

We have four inscriptions and a manuscript of the seventeenth century A.D. Of them, three inscriptions are in the Narasimha temple at Vāḍapalli. One of these records the gifts of certain levies to Lord Narasimha. This is dated

S. 1529, *Phalguna*, *Phālguna* (February, 1608 A.D.). The *bhaṭṭas*, who came to attend the marriages in the *kōmaṭi* houses at *Vādapalli*, assembled in the temple of *Narasimhadēva*, where *Janumaila Vīrāppa* submitted that they should give *phanji-paikalu*, which they were getting from the *Kōmaṭi* house-holds during marriages, to god *Lākshmi Narasimha* for daily offerings and lighting.²⁸ There is also another inscription in the temple of *Narasimha*, dated S' 1530, *Jyēṣṭha* (=1608 A.D; May). It records that when *Mohammad Quli Qutbshah* was ruling at *Gōlkoṇḍa*, *Amiran Mālik* was appointed as *Moksha* (Governor) of *Vazirābād* region and that his ministers *Telupunuri konapa* and *Malaya Kholapu Samgoji*, gifted the village *Kothapalli* as 'agrahāra' to Lord *Narasimha Swāmy* at the request of some elderly persons of *Vādapalli*.²⁹ The third inscription in the same temple dated S' 1541, *Siddhārthi* (A.D. 1619), records that *Bhaṭṭā chārya* visited *Vādapalli* and established some custom in the temple administration.³⁰

There is an inscription on a stone pillar on the tank bund of *Śanigaram* in *Karīm-nagar* district belonging to the reign of *Abdullah Qutb Shāh* of *Gōlkoṇḍa* (1627-1672 AD). The inscription states that according to the *farman* of the Sultan, his officer, named *Syed Muzafar Sarkha*, granted a sum of 540 *honnus* of gold coins to the *Haval-dār*, *Menavi Bēg*, for constructing a big tank and 107 *honnus* for patronising the *Brāhmīns* of *Narasimha kshētra* as usual.³¹ There is a temple of *Narasimha Swāmy* on the hillock and one in the village even now. There are manuscripts of *Mādanna* (*Mādhōbhānujī Surya Prākāsh Rāo*), the famous minister of *Abul Hasan* (*Tānāshā*) of *Gōlkoṇḍa*, who granted gift of lands to the *Brāhmīns* of *Dharmapuri* in *Karīm-nagar* district, for the conduct of daily worship, offerings, and ceremonial rituals to Lord *Narasimha*. These documents are known today as *Munigāla Chidrupayya's* documents, *Panatulavāri Patramulu* (documents) and *Vajjala vāri Patramulu*. They bear the official stamp of *Mādanna* and are dated 1676 A.D. They are still with *Sanganabhaṭṭa Narahari*, a resident of *Dharmapuri*,³²

Abul Hasan continued the policy of toleration, patronising the temples till the conquest of Gōlkoṇḍa by Aurangazēb in 1687 A.D.

There is a solitary literary work, which we find, during the 17th century pertaining to this cult. The well known poet, Dhurjati mentions the visit of Krishṇā dēvarāya to Simhādri in his book entitled 'Krishṇarāya Vijayamu'.³³ The poet lived about 1650.³⁴ A.D.

After the fall of Bahamanis and Qutb Shahis, the next phase of anti-Hinduism started under Aurangazēb. He was an uncompromising emperor, who followed vigorously the policy of religious aggrandisement against the Hindus. His subordinates also followed in his foot-steps. Rustumdilkhān, the Subēdār of Hyderābād, converted the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy at Dharmapuri in Karīm-nagar district into a mosque on 5th Rabbilavval, 35th Julus of Aurangazēb (1693 A.D.) and appointed Abdul Hasan Faras as 'Moujan' and granted lands for its maintenance. He issued a farman to this effect. This document is known today as Syed Fathe Āli's document. This is a manuscript.³⁵ This was the last known act of vandalism of the Mughals in Telangāna. In the early part of the 18th century, Mubārīkhān, the Subēdār of Hyderābād, during the reign of Farooq Shiyar (1713-1719) of Mughal dynasty, bestowed the title of 'Dēshmukh' on Juvvāḍi Chōkka Rao with the right to enjoy the parganas of Polasa and Deevakonda. Later on, Chōkka Rao granted many gifts to Lord Narasimha Swamy of Dharmapuri in Karīm-nagar district.³⁶ With the defeat of Mubarizkhan at Shakkarkhēd by Nizamulmuluk in 1724³⁷, the Deccan was under the rule of Āsaf Jahi dynasty from 1724-1948. Mīr Osman Ali Khan was the Seventh and the last Nawab of Āsaf Jahi dynasty of Hyderabad. These Nawabs followed in general the policy of religious toleration and conciliation. Though there was no development of Hindu religion during this period, there was no repression of Hinduism. The Hindus were free to worship

their gods in their temples. But there was no initiative on the part of the Nawabs to develop the existing temples or to establish new ones.

Undated Inscriptions

There are three undated inscriptions found at Koravi, in the Warangal district and at Ālāmpūr of Mahabūbnagar district. There is an inscription on one of the pillars in the mantapa of Narasimha swamy temple at Koravi. It is a Telugu stanza describing the fierce appearance of Lord Narasimha taken from the Prahlāda charitra of Pōtana's Āndhra Mahābhāgavatam. Prahlāda says that he is not so much terrified with the fierce appearance of the god as of the wild fire of 'saṁsāra'.³⁸ There is another inscription in Telugu carved on one of the stone-slabs used for paving the floor of Rāma Maṇḍiram in Hanamkōṇḍa. It records the Pratishṭha (consecration) of Narasimha by Śrīdharayōgi in Auuma Kōṇḍa city.³⁹ There is another inscription engraved on a stone-step beside the shrine of Hanumān in the temple of Narasimha at Ālāmpūr in Mahabūbnagar district. This inscription is kept in the museum at Ālāmpūr. It registers a gift to Narasimha dēvara by a certain Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Rayi Dēva Mahārāja for his own merit. The last portion of the inscription is damaged.⁴⁰

Cult in the 19th and 20th Centuries:

There is a vast amount of literature with reference to the cult of Narasimha in Telugu during the 19th and 20th centuries. Tyāga Rāja Swāmi was a great devotee of Viṣṇu. He was a great scholar in vocal music, who flourished during 1767-1847.⁴¹ He wrote Prahlāda Bhakta Vijayamu. In it the legend of Prahlāda is described. The next renowned poet is Sēshappa or Sēshācchataḍāsa. He belonged to the village Dharmapuri of Karimnagar district.⁴² He wrote Nrikēsari and Narasimha Satakas. Narasimha śatakam was Published in 1868 AD. Dr. K. Gōpala Krishṇā Rāo says that he lived about 1800.⁴³

A.O.K. Lakshmi rājanam assigns him to the early period of 19th century.⁴⁴ The poet dedicated his two śatakas to Lord Nara-simha. The other great poet, Naraśimhadāsa wrote a song entitled 'Rōhilālapāṭa', when the Rōhillās plundered the village Dharmapuri in 1858. It is a manuscript, dated 1858.⁴⁵ A.D. Another poet who hailed from Kolanupāka of Nalgōṇḍa district was Tiruvāivēnkaṭa kavi. He wrote Yādagiri Satakamu on Lord Narsimha of Yādagiri. He lived about 1840.⁴⁶ Jaṭa-prōlusamsthāna in Telangāṇa is very famous as a patron of literature. Krishṇamāchāry, a great scholar and poet lived about 1875 A.D. He wrote 'Nisimha Vilāsamu', a poetical work in Telugu, and dedicated it to Rājā Surabhi Venkaṭa Jagannātha Rāo of Jaṭaprōlu samsthānamu. The poet received an 'agrahāra' from the Rāja.⁴⁷

Pertaining to the last part of the 19th century, we have two books. One is the Sthala purāṇa of Limbādri Naraśimha Swāmy of Bheemgal, in Nizāmābād district, which was published in 1884. It is said that it was a part of Brahmakaivarta Purāṇa of Vyāsa Maharshi. The second is S maādri Naraśimha Śatakamu in Telugu, written by Gōgulapāṭi Kurmanāthe Kavi, who lived in the last part of the 19th century.⁴⁸

There is a considerable amount of literature that has come up during the 20th century on the cult of Naraśimha. Mention may be made here of Srīmadbhāgāvata Sāramu of Vāvilāla Venkaṭa Sivāva- dhānulu in 1918, Brahmānda purāṇa of Vyāsa into Telugu by Janamañchi Sārma in 1922, Daśavatāra Charitramu of Dhara- needēvulu Rāmaiah Mañtai in 1926, Mahābhakta Vijayamu of Srīpāda Subramaṇya Sāstri in 1953, Sampurna Bhakta Vijayamu of Jonnalagaḍḍa Satyanāyaṇa murti in 1962, Srīmannimbagiri Nrisimha Satakamu of Nūmbi S. Idhar Rāo (Telangāṇa) 1968, Andhra Bhāgavatōpanyāsamulu of Vēdāla Tiruvēṅgaḷā Chārya (Telangāṇa) in 1969, Srīmadbhāgavatānu Śeelānamu of Dr. Dhulipāḷi Srī Rāma Murty in 1972, Srī Yādagiriśa Stōtrarātnamu' of Singabhaṭṭu Naraśimharāju (Telangāṇa), Nārāyaṇyam of Vidwān kallur Vēnkaṭa Subramaṇya Deekshitulu in 1977,

Yādagirīndra Satakamu of Tiruvāyipati Vēṅkaṭa kavi (Telangana), **Matṭapalli Nṛsiṃha satakamu** and manuscripts bearing R.Nos. 221 and 527 of the catalogue of Telugu of Madras Oriental MSS Library.⁴⁹ Apart from such literary works, there are several anonymous writers who sang devoiional songs in praise of Lord Narasiṃha.

Though the temple became the targets of vandalism during the Muslim rule and suffered damage, the spiritual vigour of Hindu religion and philosophy survived. When the Mughal storm had passed, noble and generous people came forward to revive the temples and gave gift of lands for maintaining them. After the dawn of independence, there is a tremendous revival and reinforcement of the religious spirit. The cult grows up and spreads among other things, by the rich amount of the ancient tradition. The devotional songs preserved in literature and tradition, Harikathās, discourses, and literary works on God, in simple and sweet language, be it satakas, sthalapurāṇās of the temples, booklets and pamphlets, instil confidence and devotion into the hearts of the devotees. Thus, the cult continues to develop among the people with a depth of feeling and devotion, specially for a particular god, known as 'Ilavēlupu' or 'Iṣṭa daivam' (family god). Lord Narasiṃha is such a family god to the countless people in this part of the country, fulfilling the cherished desires of His devotees and making them visit His temple again and again with renewed hope and strength.

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CHAPTER IV

SELECT CENTRES OF NARASIMHA WORSHIP IN TELANGANA

Numerous centres of Narasimha worship are found all over the region of Telāṅgāṇa, testifying the popularity of the cult of Narasimha in the area. Reviewing the historical times and the present, some of these centres continue to be carrying on worship even today, while some others contain only ruins testifying the worship of Narasimha there in the past or referred to in inscriptions only.

Thus, the centres of Narāsimha worship in Telāṅgāṇa may be classified into two categories.

- (1) Centres where regular worship is being conducted even to-day.
- (2) Centres referred to in inscriptions or are in ruins.

Now the centres where regular worship is being conducted and among them having historical records are given. The centres have been arranged district and taluk-wise.

1. ĀDILĀBĀD DISTRICT

Nirmal Taluk

1. Kālwa

Mudhōl Taluk

1. Bhaisa (Bhainsa)

Lakshettipēt Taluk

1. Dwāraka

2. Kāśipet
3. Maṇḍapalle
2. Dildārṇagar

Khānāpur Taluk

1. Khānāpur

2. HYDERABAD DISTRICT

Hyderābād Area

1. Śrī Ahōbilam Mutt, Bāgh Amberpet.
2. Śrī Narasimha Mandir, Sultān bazār.
3. Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy Temple, Mārwaḍi basti, Bēgum bazār.
4. Narsing Maṇḍir, Bēgum bazār.
5. Pārik (Narsing) Maṇḍir, Kōlse Wāḍi, Begum bazār.
6. Narsing Maṇḍir, Kāsarhaṭṭa, Chārminār Chowk.
7. Narsingbhānu Temple, Sipligaṇj, Hussaini Alam.
8. Narasimha Temple, Old Kabutar Khāna, Charminar Chowk.
9. Lakshmī Narasimha Temple, Kummarwāḍi, Mustak Pura.
10. Narasimha Temple; Chilakala gūḍa, Hyderabad.
11. Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, Chaitanya puri, Hyderabad.

Secunderabad Area

1. Narasimha Temple, Kings way, Secunderābād.
2. Narasimha Swāmy Temple, Nālā bazār, Secunderābād.
3. Narasimha Maṇḍir, Mahāṅkāli Street, Secunderābād.
4. Narsing Maṇḍir, Jeera, Secunderābād.

3. KARIMNAGAR DISTRICT

Karīmṇagar Taluk

1. Narasimlapalle (Kōṭla)
2. Nāgula malyāl.
3. Yelgāṇḍal

4. **Bejjaṅki**
5. **Shanigaram.**
6. **Chērlāpur.**
7. **Cherlabooth kur.**
8. **Koorella.**
9. **Rāmaṅcha.**
10. **Nallagoṇḍa.**
11. **Gannērvaram.**

Sircilla Taluk

1. **Nallagoṇḍa.**
2. **Nāmpalli.**
3. **Taṅgaḷapalli**

Metpalle Taluk

1. **Mēdipalle.**
2. **Vellulla.**
3. **Peggerla.**
4. **Dumpeṭa.**

Jagtial Taluk

1. **Tuṅgur.**
2. **Beerpur.**
3. **Charlakoṇḍāpur (hamlet of Rāikal).**
4. **Gōpālpur.**
5. **Chinnāpuram.**
6. **Liṅgāpuram.**
7. **Gourāpuram.**
8. **Namilakoṇḍa.**
9. **Dharmapuri.**

Sultānābād Taluk

1. **Rāghavāpuram.**
2. **Kodurupāka.**

Peddapalli Taluk

1. Sundilla.
2. Peddāpuram.
3. Moolaśāla.
4. Nimmanapalle.

Huzurābād Taluk

1. Bijgir sharif.
2. Ratnagiri.

4. KHAMMAM DISTRICT

Khammam Taluk

1. Khammam.
2. Nāgulawañcha.
3. Pātarla pādu.
4. Muḍigoñḍa,
5. Yaḍlavalli.
6. Lachagudem.

Yellañdu Taluk

1. Kambala palle.
2. Rompaid.
3. Pulluru.

Bhadrachālam Taluk

1. Kāchavaram.

Madhira Taluk

1. Meena vōlu.

5 MAHABUB NAGAR DISTRICT

Mahabubnagar Taluk

1. Mahabubnagar Town.
2. Ippatur.
3. Koyilkoṇḍa.

Shādnagar Taluk

1. Kōnudurḡ.
2. Kamsāni palle.
3. Byru Khān palli.
4. Santhapur.

Kalvakurti Taluk

1. Thāla koṇḍa palli.
2. Bhairam palle.

Achampēt Taluk

1. Māmiḷḷa palli.

Kollāpur Taluk

1. Siṅga watnam.

Nāgarkarnool Taluk

1. Vaṭṭam.
2. Yeṇḍabetla.
3. Vallabham palle.
4. Pedda palle.

Wanaparti Taluk

1. Wanaparti.
2. Kātavaram.

Ālāmpur Taluk

1. Ālāmpur.

Maktal Taluk

- 1, Maganur.

6 MEDAK DISTRICT

Saṅgāreḍḍi Taluk

1. Saṅgāreḍḍi.
2. Rāmēśwar baṇṭa.

Narsāpur Taluk

1. Ooḷḷa.
2. Shērkhān palle.
3. Pedda chinṭa kuṇṭa.
4. Sikaṇḍlapur.

Rāmāyampēt Taluk

1. Rāmāyampēt.

Medak Taluk

1. Koṇṭāpur.
2. Hastālpur.

Gajwel Taluk

1. Dilālpur
2. Aṅgaḍi kistāpur
3. Vellur.
4. Kuchāram,
3. Nāchāram.

Siddipēt Taluk

1. Ghanpur.
- 2; Guṛṛalagoṇḍi.
3. Pulluru.

7. NALGONDA DISTRICT

Nalgoṇḍa Taluk

1. Kompalle.
2. Shāpalle.
3. Melladuppall palle.

Suryāpēt Taluk

1. Naṇḍāpur.
2. Gottiparṭi.
3. Kukkadam,
4. Tuṅgaturthi.
5. Arvapalli.
6. Kaṇḍaghatla.
7. Urlugoṇḍa:
8. Sirikoṇḍa.
9. Chaṇḍu bhaṭṭa (near-Nakrekal)
10. Rēpāla (near Munagala)

Huzurnanar Taluk

1. Mattapalli.

Miryalaguda Taluk

1. Salknoor.
2. Vāḍapalle (Wazīrābād).

Dēvarakoṇḍa Taluk

1. Sārampēt.
2. Yarugoṇḍlapalle.
3. Madnāpur.
4. Tuṅgapāti gowrāram.

Bhōngir Taluk

1. Ibrāhimpur.
2. Yādagiripalle (Yadagiriguṭṭa).
3. Peddi reḍḍi guḍa (humlet of Datar palle)
4. Maqdoom palle.

Rāmānnapet Taluk

1. Bijilāpūr,
2. Venkatāpūr.
3. Kākkireṇi.

8. NIZAMABAD DISTRICT**Nizāmābād Taluk**

1. Nizāmābād Town,
2. Dhari palle.
3. Binōla.
4. Manik baṇḍār.

Ārmoor Taluk

1. Ārmoor.
2. Jalāl pur.
3. Nāgapur.
4. Chout palle,
5. Bheemgal.
6. Bāikonḍa.

Kamāreḍḍi Taluk

1. Chukkāpur.

Madnur Taluk

1. Madnur.

Bōdhan Taluk

1. Kopperga.
2. Jānakāmpet.

9. RANGAREDDY DISTRICT Rājeṇdranagar Taluk

1. Shamshābād.
2. Moosāpēt.

Ibrahīmpatnam Taluk

1. Ibrahīmpatnam.

Maheshwaram Taluk

1. Raviryāl.
2. Kongara kalan.

10. WARANGAL DISTRICT Warāṅgal Taluk

1. Urugoṇḍa,
2. Kommāla.
3. Geesugoṇḍa.
4. Vēlupukoṇḍa (Zafargadh).
5. Chilpur.
6. Varadannapēt.
7. Hanumkoṇḍa,
8. Chinna pendyala.
9. Kakkirala palli.
10. Kotturu.
11. Illanda.

Parakāl Taluk

1. Kodavaṭaṇcha.

Eturi nāgāram Taluk

1. Gaṅgāram.
2. Malluru.

Narsampet Taluk

1. Timmāpet.
2. Paṇikara.

Mahabūbābād Taluk

1. Ingurti.
2. Narsimlapēt.
3. Katāyapālem.
4. Kesamudram.
5. Kommaguḍa.
6. Narsimlaguḍem.
7. Nēraḍa.
8. Kāndikoṇḍa.

Jangām Taluk

1. Liṅgālaghana puram.
2. Kadaverṇḍi.
3. Pālakurti.

Under the second category, following are the centres of Narasimha worship known from inscriptions,

1. **Koravi** (Mahabubābād Taluk, Warangal District)

The inscription is undated and is on one of the pillars in the maṇḍapa of Narasimha Swāmy Temple. It is a Telugu Verse describing the fierce appearance of the god Narasimha Prahlāda Charitra of Pōtana's Āndhra Mahabhāgavatamu, when Prahlāda says that he is not so much terrified by the fierce appearance of the god, as by the wild fire of saṁsāra.(1)

2. Hanamkonda (Warāṅgal District)

There is an undated inscription in Telugu prose, carved on one of the stone slabs used for paving the floor of Rāma maṇḍiram in Hanamkonda. It records the praṭistha of Narasiṃha by Śrīdhara Yōgi in Anumakoṇḍa City in A-2, Āśvayuja' Śuddha 5, Thursday.²

3. Vardhamanapuram (Vaddemānu, Mahabubnagar District)

This Telugu inscription records the consecration of a number of deities on Thursday, Śu. 10 of the month of Māgha in the Year Svābhanu, Śaka Year 1145 (=Thursday, 1 February, AD. 1224) by Bhīma dēva preggada, the Srikarṇa of Ganapayya, son of Gōna Buddhī Reddī. This covent occurred while śrīmān Maha Maṇḍalēśvara (Kākatīya Gaṇapaṭi dēva Mahārāja) was ruling from Orumagallu as his capital. Gōna Ganapayya, son of Buddi Reddy is stated to have obtained by the grace of his sovereign, Kaṇḍurunāḍu, which he was governing from Vardhamānāpura. Bhīmadēva consecrated Śrī Lakṣmī Narasiṃha Nārāyaṇa dēvara in the name of his father.³

4. Pedda kadumuru (Mahabubnagar District)

The inscription is on a black stone pillar before the temple of Brahmēśwara in the village. It is dated C. V. E. 40 (=Ad. 1115). It records the prayers to Dēvatās and Daśavā-tārās and registers charities made by Saudhara Bollaya Nāyaka to gods, Nrisimha and others during the reign of Gōkarṇa.⁴

Coming under the second category, is the temple at Kaṭṭāyapāṭem, Mahabubābad Taluk of Warāṅgal District. which is in a dilapidated condition and with no worship being performed for the Lord. It is an abandoned temple.

ĀDILĀBĀD DISTRICT

Nirmal Taluk

1. Kalwa

The village is situated at a distance of twelve kilometres from Nirmal, the headquarters of the taluk.

There is a small temple, dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha swāmy on a hillock, which is two kilometers off the village. At the foot of the hillock, nearly 200 yards away, there are two more temples, one is of Narasimha and the other is of Dharmapuri Narasimha swāmy.

There are no historical records relating to the temple. Some information relating to the tradition has been gathered from interviewing the local persons and in particular from the priest of the temple.

Temple on the Hillock

The temple on the hillock facing east has only a sanctum, $1\frac{1}{2}' \times 2' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'$.

The image of the deity, carved of black stone, has four hands. The upper right hand has chakra and the upper left hand, sankha. The lower right hand is in 'abhaya posture' and the left hand is taken round the waist of Lakshmi from behind. The right leg is hanging and the left leg is folded. On his left lap, Lakshmi is seated. The image has makuta and haras. The mouth is open and eyes are bulging.

The Lord's image is 8' high and his consort's is 3' high.

Near the foot of the hillock, there are two temples, dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy and Dharmapuri Narasimha Swāmy respectively. There are a few choultries for the pilgrims here. There is also a 'koneru' to the east of the temple.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple consists of a sanctum and mukha maṇṭapa. The sanctum is of 6' X 6'. The mukha maṇṭapa was added to the sanctum in 1972. It consists of 16 pillars with an area of 16 1/2 X 18 feet.

At the back wall of the sanctum, there are ten wooden sticks, each 1' in height and two more sticks each 2' in height. They are kept standing by the wall on a small raised platform. They are decorated with three caste marks of Srivaishnavas.

In front of them, there is a small pedestal on which stands a circular brass plate. In the middle of this plate, there are three caste marks and on either side of the 'namas' are chakra and shankha. It is believed that they are the form of Lord Narasimha Swāmy.

The Temple of Dharmapuri Narasimha Swamy

This temple, which is 200 yards away, is to the north-east of the Narasimha temple. It has only a room in which on a small platform, there are three wooden sticks, each 1' in height, decorated with 'namas', on them. There is a pair of wooden sandals (Padukas) in front of them. Here the people believe that the three 'namas' are the form of Dharmapuri Narasimha Swāmy. Dharmapuri is in Karimnagar district where there is a famous temple of Narasimha.⁵

Pancharatra Agama is followed here. The priest is a chattani Vaishṇava. Every day 'aradhana' and 'naivēdyam' are performed to the Lord. The Brahmōtsavam of the Lord is celebrated from vaiśākha purnīma to Bahula chaviti (May-June) for five days at the hillock. The utsava idols of the Lord are brought here from the house of the priest in the village on vaiśākha śudha Duśami and they are taken back to the village temple on vaiśākha bahuḷa pañchami. On the day

of pournami (full moon), about 2000 people, local and from the surrounding villages, congregate and on the remaining days of the annual festival nearly 1000 people assemble.

The priest is hereditary and runs the temple with contributions from the devotees. On every Saturday nearly 200 people, local and from the neighbouring villages visit the temple with their families. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), the number of pilgrims goes upto 300. On an average every day about 30 people visit the temple.

There is an 'Are' tree in front of the temple of Dharmapuri Narasimha Swamy. The pilgrims embrace the trunk of the tree, which, they believe, bestows favours upon them.

MUDHOL TALUK

1. Bhaisa (Bhainsa)

It is situated at a distance of 30 kilometres, from Bāsar Railway Station, on the Kāchiguda-Manmād section of the South Central Railway and 16 kilometres from Mudhol, the head quarters of the taluk.

Ugra Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple of Ugra Narasimha Swāmy is on the small hillock near the bus-stand, in the village. There are no archaeological or historical evidences relating to the temple. Some information relating to the tradition has been gathered from interviewing the local persons and in particulars from the priest of the temple. The traditional account relating to the origin of the temple is as follows:⁶

About 150 years ago, Lord Narsimha had appeared in the dream of a village head-man. The Lord ordained him to construct a temple for Himself, on the rock, where he had

manifested himself. Accordingly the temple was constructed. Later in 1965, the mukhamantapa was constructed with liberal donations from the local people.

The temple is on a hillock. The rock on which Lord Narasimha Swāmy had manifested Himself forms the rear wall of the sanctum. The mukhamantapa was constructed with cement roof which is 54 X 55 1/2 feet approximately. The temple faces the north.

The image of the Lord on the is 1 1/2 'x 1 1/2' seated on a small pedestal, with the legs hanging down. The deity has four hands. In the upper right hand is a chakra and in the left hand is a śankha. He holds lotusbuds in his lower hands. He wears a makuta and a few 'haras'. He looks fierce with tongue protruding. His mouth remains open and eyes bulging. He has "kōrameesalu". At the lower left hand of the Lord, his consort, Lakshmi is standing, wearing a makuta. She is one foot in height. At the lower right hand of the Lord, Garuḍa is standing with folded hands facing the Lord.

Smarta tradition is followed here in the worship of the Lord. There are nine Maharastra brahmins who worship the Lord in turn. Besides daily worship to the Lord, there is a special worship on every Saturday,

Nrisimha Jayanti is celebrated in a befitting manner. It is known as 'utsava' there. About 600, local Hindus, irrespective of caste or creed congregate on that day to witness the ceremony of the Lord, Dasara and other Hindu festivals are celebrated in this temple. On the day of Dasara, the Lord goes out of the temple on a vehicle, for what is known as 'Jammiseva'.

The temple is run by a committee with donations from the local people. Every day nearly ten people visit the temple. On Saturday, about 200 people visit the Lord.

LUXETTIPET TALUK

1. Dwaraka

It is situated at a distance of 21 kilometres from Luxettipet, the taluk head quarters. There is a temple dedicated to Narasimha Swāmy in the village.

2. Kasipet

It is situated at a distance of 19 kms, from Luxettipet, the taluk head quarters. There is a temple of Narasimha in the village.

3. Mandapalle

It is situated at a distance of 28 kms from Nirmal town. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village.

4. Dildarnagar

It is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Khānāpur, taluk head quarters. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the forest, near the village. The Lord is known here as Akka Konda Narasimha Swamy.

The priests here are Srivaishnavas who follow pancha-ratra Agama in the worship of the Lord. The annual festival is celebrated for three days in the month of Māgham (February-March). This festival has been celebrated for the past 70 years. The devotees take bath in the river Gōdāvari and observe fast on this occasion. This festival is confined to this and the neighbouring villages. There are some choultries also for the pilgrims.

KHĀNĀPUR TALUK

1. Khanapur

Khānāpur is the Taluk head quarters of the same name. There is a temple dedicated to Narasimha Swāmy.

HYDERABAD DISTRICT

1. Ahobila Mutt

This temple is situated in Bāgh Amberpēt, Hyderābād. This Mutt was constructed and consecrated on 25th September, 1979, by Śrī Vēdānta Yatindra Mahā Dēśikulu, the 44th Jīyar of Ahōbila Muth. The temple consists of sanctum, antarala, and mukhamanṭapa. In the mukhamanṭapa, on the east, there are two small shrines of Hanumān and Garuḍālvār, facing each other. There is a Rāmānuja Kutam, (Kitchen of the Lord). The entrance and the temple face the east. The sanctum and the antarala are six square feet each. The mukhamanṭapa is 36 x 27 feet. The temple was constructed with cement only.

The presiding deity is a block stone image of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy. He is in the form of man-lion. The Lord is sitting on a pedestal, with the right leg hanging down and the left leg folding at the knee. Lakshmi, his consort, is seated on his left lap. The Lord has four hands. He holds Chakra in the upper right hand and the Shankha is in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and his left hand is on the waist of his consort, Lakshmi. He has three 'namas' on his fore head. The Lord wears 'hārās' and a pointed makuṭa. Above the makuta, there is a five-hooded serpent. The god has protruding eyes, open mouth, bulging cheeks and thick mane which give him a fierce look. The Lord is 2' in height. Lakshmi, seated on the left lap of the Lord, hands down her legs. She wears a makuta. She holds a lotus in her left hand and her right hand is on the back of the Lord. The image of Lakshmi is 1' high. The pedestal of the Lord, is 1 1/2' in height.

In front of the presiding deity are the utsava (Procession) idols of Prahlādā varadan, Śrī Dēvi and Bhudēvi. They face the east. To the left of the presiding deity and the utsava

idols, the idols of Rāmānujāchārya, Vedānta Mahā Dēśikulu and Śrī Ādivan Shathagōpa Yatindra Mahā Dēshikar, the first Jiyar, are installed, They face the South. There is a Circumambulatory passage around the sanctum.

Pancharātra Āgama is being followed here. The priests are Śrī Vaishnavas. The daily programme is as given below.

1. Suprabhātam — 6-30 A. M.
2. Abhigamanārādhana — 7-30 – 8-15 A. M.
3. Śātmurai — 8 15 – 8-30 A. M.
4. Gōshti (Naivēdya) — 8-30 A. m.
5. Ijya Ārādhana — 10 00 – 10-45 A. m.
Morning Puja ends.
6. Temple is opened again at 4-15 P. M.
7. Sahasranāma Archana — 5-30 – 6-30 P. M.
8. Pānaka (Jaggery water) Ārādhana 6-30 – 7-30 P. M.
9. Kōti Archana — 7-30 – 8-30 P. M.

The Kōti Archana is consisted of

- a) Śrī Vishṇu Sahasra Nāmārchana
 - b) Nrisimha Ashṭōttaram
 - c) Lakshmī Ashṭōttaram
 - d) Vainatēya Ashṭōttaram and
 - e) Ānjanēya Ashṭōttaram
10. Śātumurai — 8-30 – 9-00 P. M.
 11. The temple remains closed at 9-30 P. M.

Śātumurai is forbidden nearly for a month from Krittika Nakshtram of Vrishchika māsam to Hastami Nakshtram of Makara māsam (December-January) at this temple. The Tiru nakshatra (natal constellations obtaining at the time of birth) of Narasimha, Swāti, is celebrated once in every month. Abhishēkam is performed to the Lord on this day and on payment by the devotees on other days.

The following festivals are celebrated :

1. Ugādi, the Telugu New year Day, (April).
2. Nrisimha Jayanti on Vishākha Śudha Chaturdaśi (May)
3. The Tiru nakshatram of Rāmānujācharya on Ārudra of Mēsha māsam (April-May).
4. Tiru nakshatram of Vedānta Yatīndra Mahā Dēshikulu, the 44th Jeer of Ahōbila Mutt on Hastami of Simha māsam (August)
5. Vijaya Dashami (October),
6. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Vēdānta Mahā Deśikulu, on Śravaṇam of Tulā masam (October).
7. Tiru nakshatram of Ādivan Shathagōpa yatīndra Mahā deśikar, the first Jeer and founder of the Ahōbila Mutt, at Ahōbilam, on Jyeshtha of Kanyā māsam (September-October).
8. Deepavali (October-November).
9. Kārtika Pournami-Kārtika deepōtsvam (November), (Decoration of the temple with lamps).
10. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Ranganatha shathagōpa yatīndra Mahā dēsikulu, the 40th Jeer, on Vishākha of Dhanur māsam (December-January),
11. Tiru nakshatram of Lakshmī Narasimha Shathagōpa Yateendra Maha Deśikar on Purvābhādra of Dhanur masam (December-January).
12. Śrī Śrī Raṅga Yateendra Mahā Dēśika Tiru nakshatram on Purvābhādra of Makara māsam (January-February).

The temple is run by Śrī Vēdānta Yateendra Mahādēśikulu, the 44th and the present Jeer of Ahōbila Mutt of Ahōbilam.

The manager appointed by the Jeer, runs the temple with two priests and an attendant. The liberal contribution from the devotees is the main source of income to the temple.

Every day nearly 50 people visit the temple, On festival days, about 200 people visit the temple.

2. Sri Narasimha Mandir

This temple is situated in Sultan bazar, Hyderabad. It is stated that the temple was established three hundred years ago.⁸ There are two choultries in the premises of the temple for the pilgrims.

The temple consists of a sanctum, antarala and mukha mantapa. The sanctum and antarala are six square feet each. The mukhamantapa is approximately 21 x 24 feet. In the sanctum, on a raised platform, the metal images of Narasimha and his two consorts are installed.

The Lord wears a m akuta. He is standing. On his either side are his two consorts. He has four hands. The disc is in his upper rights hand and the conch is in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya Posture and the left is in varada posture. The height of the idol of the Lord is 1' in height. There is a silver prabha over the idol of the Lord. The other images in the Sanctum are of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Sīta and Krishṇa, There is a circumambulatory passage around the Sanctum.

Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Every day worship and naivēdyam are performed to the Lord. In the night, milk and fruits are offered to the Lord as naivedya. The Brahmotsavam of the Lord Narasimha is celebrated for five days from Vaishākha Śudha Ekādaśi to Pūrṇima (May).

The programme is as follows ;

1. Kumbhābhishēkam to the Lord and Naivēdya - Ekādāśi

2. Kumbhābhishēkam to the Lord and Naivedya - Dwādaśi

3. Kumbhābhishēkam to the Lord and Naivedya - Trayōdaśi

4. Kumbhābhishēkam to the Lord and Naivedya - Chaturdaśi

Chaturdaśi is celebrated as the Nrisimha Jayanti. There is a separate idol for the celebration of Nrisimha Jayanti. A 'Burrakatha' is presented to the gathering on Narasimha and his birth. Later on, the birth day of the Lord is celebrated.

5. Rathotsavam (car festival) - Pournima

The Lord and his two consorts are taken out of the temple and are installed on a wooden car. The wooden car, with the procession of the devotees, goes through the streets of Sultan bazar at 5.30 P.M., on pournami, the last day of the annual festival. About 5,000 people local and from distant places like Karimaagar and Vijayawada, congregate irrespective of caste and creed.

The other festivals are

1. Ugādi (April)
2. Śrī Rāma Navami (April)
3. Gōkulashtami (August)
4. Dasara (October)
5. Kārtika māsam-full month (November) During the month of Kartikam (November), every day nearly 300 people visit the temple.
- 6' Dhanurmāsam (15th December-14th January) During this period, about 500 people visit the temple daily.

The temple is run by a committee. The main source of income to the temple is house-rent from the thirteen shops, before the temple. Daily, about 200 local people visit the temple.

3. Lakshmi Narasimha Mandir

This temple is in the Marwadi basti of Begam bazar. It is stated that this was built by Khyāli Bāba, three hundred years ago.⁹ There are twelve tombs of the Byrāgis on the premises of the temple. There is a small 'Śiva' temple, to the east of the temple. There is also a small shrine of Hanumān. There are many other rooms in the premises. It is also known as Byrāgi mutt here.

The temple consists of a sanctum and mukha maṇṭapa with an area 6 x 6 feet and 30 x 18 feet respectively. The image of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in marble is installed on a raised platform attached to the back wall of the sanctum. The Lord is seated on Garuḍa (Kite-vehicle), the vehicle of the Lord. He hangs down his legs. His consort, Lakshmi, is seated on his left lap. The Lord has four hands. He holds 'Gada' in his upper right hand and chakra in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in 'Varadahastā' and his left hand holding the conch is on the waist of Lakshmi.

The other idols in the sanctum are of Sudarshana perumāṇḍlu, Viṣṇu and his two consorts, Rādhakrishṇa and Balaji and his two consorts. There is a circumambulatory passage around the sanctum.

The priest is a vaishnava, who follows the vaishnava tradition in the worship of the Lord. Every day 'Puja and Naivedyam' are performed to the Lord,

There is no 'Kalyāṇōtsavam' to the Lord here. The other festivals which are celebrated in this temple are

1. Ugādi (April)
2. Śrī Rāma Navami (April)
3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May)
4. Hanuman Jayanti (May)
5. Janmashtami (August)
6. Dhanurmāsam (December-January)

The temple is run by the hereditary priest with the income of Rs. 600 per month from the rent of the shops. About 300 devotees congregate on the eve of Nrisimha Jayanti festival. Nearly 50 people visit the temple daily.

4. Narsing Mandir

The temple is situated in Begam bazar, Hyderābād. The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy was constructed by Murlidhar, a Marwari Vaishnava in 1946. A.D.¹⁰ There is a choultry constructed by Srikishan, son of Murlidhar.

The temple consists of a sanctum and mukha mantapa. The sanctum and the mukha mantapa are 40 x 3 and 21 x 18 feet respectively. There is a raised platform attached to the back wall of the sanctum, where the copper idol of Narasimha and other idols are installed. The presiding deity is Narasimha Swamy. The idol is 6' in height. The Lord has four hands. He has chakra in his upper right hand and the conch is in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya posture' and the left hand is on the waist of his consort, Lakshmi, who is seated on his left lap. The Lord is in padmasana. The other images in the sanctum are of Bridrāj, Bhudevi, Lakshmi devi, and Gōpāla Krishṇa.

Pancharatra Agama is being followed here. The priest is a Śrīvaishnava, who is hereditary. Every day worship and naivedya are performed to the god.

The following festivals are celebrated in this temple.

1. Ugādi (April)
2. Śrī Rāma Navami (April)

3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May). On this day, Kalyāṇōt-savam is performed to the Lord Narasimha.
4. Paraśu Rāma Jayanti on Vaishākha Śuddha Tadiya, Krittika Nakshtram (May).
5. Dasara-Sēva (October)
6. Jal Dhul Ekādaśi-Bhādrapada (September)

The Lord goes out to the river and abhishēkam is performed to him there.

7. Anukut (November)

Different kinds of dishes are offered to the Lord on a day during the period of Sudda Kartikam.

8. Dhanurmāsam (15th December to 14th January)

The temple is run by a hereditary priest. The main source of the income to the temple is from the rent of some quarters which belong to the temple. The approximate income is Rs. 700/- per month. Every day nearly 100 devotees visit the temple. During the month of Dhanurmasam, about 200 devotees pay their respects to the Lord every day.

5. Parik Mandir.

This temple is situated in Kōlsewāḍi, Begum bazar, Hyderābad. It is stated that this temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy was founded by Bankat Lāl Vyas and Jamna Lāl Khater, Mārwaris, 150 years ago.¹¹ The temple consisting of a sanctum and spacious mukha mantapa faces the east. The Hanumān temple faces Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy temple. The sanctum is 6 x 6 feet. There are other rooms in the temple. There is a platform attached to the back wall of the sanctum. It is highly raised with 3' in height.

The marble image of Narasimha Swāmy along with his consort Lakshmi, is installed in the sanctum. The image is 1' high. The Lord is standing on a pedestal. The Lord has four

hands. He holds Śankha and Chakra in his upper right hand and left hand respectively. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya-posture' and the left is on the waist of Lakshmi. Lakshmi is seated on the waist of the Lord. She appears as if, she came out of the waist of the Lord. Her legs are not visible. There are copper idols of Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Dēvi and Bhūdēvi, and Viṣṇu together with his two consorts, in the sanctum.

The priest is a smārta Brahmin. Smārta tradition is being followed here. Every day worship is done and 'naivēdyam' is offered to the Lord. The following festivals are celebrated in the temple.

1. Nṛsiṃha Jayanti (May) A drama of Naraśimha and his birth is enacted on this day.
2. Śrāvaṇa māsam (August), Nearly 50 people visit the temple and they perform 'Bhajana' in the temple every day.
3. Janmāshṭami (August)
4. Dasara (October)
5. Deepvali (November)
6. Anukūt (Anu=food, kut=bhandar)

It is celebrated for a day during the period of Kārtika Śuddha (November). Different dishes are prepared and offered to the Lord. Later on, they will be distributed to the devotees. There is a committee which runs the temple with the income from the rent of the shops. It is about Rs.500/- per month.

On the day of Nṛsiṃha Jayanti about 400 people congregate to witness the ceremony of Lord Naraśimha. During the month of Kārtikam (November), nearly 30 people pay their respects to the Lord, every day. Daily about 10 people take the 'darśan' of the Lord in the temple.

6. Narsing mandir.

There is a temple of Nārasimha known as 'Narsing Mandir' in chowk kāsarhaṭṭa, Chārmīnār, Hyderābād. It is stated that it is 100 years old.¹² The temple consists of a sanctum and mukha maṇṭapa. Opposite to the sanctum of the Lord, at some distance, there is a small temple of Hanuman. To the left of the sanctum there is an another temple of Hanumān. Behind it, there is a small Śiva temple. The sanctum is 7 1/2x4 1/2 feet and the mukha mantapa is 18x15 feet.

The Lord, carved on a black stone slab, has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and the shankha is in his upper left hand. His lower hands are in action, ripping open the bosom of the demon-king, Hiraṇya kaśipu. The Lord is seated on a raised platform in Padmāsana. The demon is stretched across his lap. The Lord has open mouth, lolling tongue and rolling eyes. He has silver moustache, ears and a mukuta which is in a pointed shape. The Lord is in ugra (aweful) form. He is 2' in height. Over the image of the Lord, there is a brass prabha. To his right side, there is a black stone standing image of prahlada which is 1' in height. To the left of the Lord there is a one foot black stone image of Lakshmi standing. The other idols are of Viṣṇu, Lakshmi, Bālāji, Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Bharata, and Sīta. There are 26 sālagrāmas in the sanctum.

The priest is a Smārta Marwadi Brahmin. Smārta tradition is followed here in the worship of the Lord. On every Suddha Chaturdasi, the abhishekam is performed to the Lord. But daily abhishekam is done to the salagramas and to the silver idol of Nārasimha along with Lakshmi. The Silver idol is 1' in height. Every day worship is done twice and naivedya is offered to the Lord.

Kaḷyānōstavam of the Lord is celebrated on the day of Narsimha Jayanti (April). On this day 'abhishēkam' and

special worship are performed to the Lord. The Lord is decorated with various ornaments. The incarnation of the Lord is celebrated at 6-00 P. M. on that day. About 500 local people congregate. The other festivals celebrated in this temple are :

1. Ugādi, the Telugu New Year day (April)
2. Śrī Rāma Navami (April)
3. Hanumān Jayanti (May)
4. Rākhi Pournima (August)
5. Vināyaka Chaviti (September)
6. Dasara (October)
7. Sharat Pournima (October)
8. Deepavali (November)
9. Dhanurmāsam (15th December to 14th January)
10. Ankut on Kartika Śuddha Chaturdaśi (November)
11. Vasanta Panchami (Hōḷi) - March.

The priest runs the temple. The source of the income to the temple is from the liberal contribution of the devotees. On Āśvīyujā Sharat Purnima, at midnight when special worship is done to the Lord, about 200 people congregate. During the month of Dhanurmasam, nearly 100 people visit the temple daily. During the month of Kārtika, everyday about fifty people visit the Lord. On other days of the remaining months, daily 20 people pay their respects to the Lord.

7. Narsing Bhanu Temple

This temple is in Sipliganj, Hussaini Ālam, Hyderābād. It is stated that Lakshmandas, a Sādhu, constructed this temple about 350 years ago.¹³

There are Narasimha, Paṇḍarīnāth, Śiva, Rama, Dattātrēya, Annapurna, Hanumān, Navagraha and Santōsh māta temples in the premises of the temple. Of these, the temple of Narasimha is the earliest one.¹⁴

There is a peepal tree in the premises. Infront of that tree, attaching to the trunk of the tree, there is stone which faces the east. To the south and the north of the stone, two stone walls have been constructed. The eastern side is open. The sanctum is $1\frac{1}{2}$ square feet and the height inside the sanctum of the temple is 3'. It is a small shrine. The stone-image of the Lord is installed on a pedestal, on which the walls of the temple (sanctum) are built. The height of the pedestal is $1\frac{1}{2}$ '. The stone attached to the trunk of the tree decorated with sindūram (red lead), is believed to be the form of Lord Narasimha Swamy.

The priest, who is known as 'Mahant' here, is a vaishnava. Everyday abhishēkam is performed and worship is done to Lord Narasimha. The Kalyāṇōtsavam of the Lord is celebrated on Ugādi, the Telugu New year day (April). About 200 local people congregate. The other important festival is Nrisimha Jayanti (May). About 400 local people visit the temple on this day. The priest runs the temple from the liberal contributions of the devotees.

Everyday nearly 60 local people visit the temple.

8. Narasimha Swamy Temple

This temple is situated in old Kabūtār Khāna street, Chārmīnār, Hyderābād. It was written on the wall of the mukhamanṭapa that a certain Narsing Rao had constructed this temple in 1345 Fasli (= 1935 AD). In the premises, the other temples are of Śiva, Navagrah, Hanumān and Tulaja Bhavāni. It is stated that Narasimha temple is the earliest of all the temples.¹⁵

The temple consists of sanctum, and mukhamanṭapa. The sanctum is $6 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ feet and the mukhamanṭapa is 12×9 feet. Opposite to the sanctum, there is a small temple of Garuḍa. Above the door of the sanctum, there is a sculpture

of Narasimha, carved on a stone. He hangs down his legs. Hiranya Kaśipu is laid across the lap of the Lord. The Lord has rolling eyes and lolling tongue. His thick mane is spread over his shoulders. The Lord has four hands. He holds Chakra in his upper right hand and Śankha in his upper left hand. His lower hands are in action opening the bosom of the demonking. Hiranyakaśipu. The sculpture is 1 1/4 in height. It touches the roof of the mukhamantapa.

The copper idol of Narasimha is the presiding deity, installed on a raised platform attached to the back wall of the sanctum. The idol is 6" in height. The Lord has rolling eyes and Puffed up cheeks. He wears a pointed 'makuta'. He has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and śankha in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and the left in 'varada posture'. The Lord is standing. Beside the Lord, to the left, the standing idol of Lakshmi is there. She is 3" in height. The other small copper idols are of Krishna, Vēṅkatēswara and his two consorts.

The priest is a Smārta Brahmin. Smārta tradition is being followed here. Everyday worship is done and 'naivedyam' is offered to the Lord. Jaggery water is offered as naivēdyam to the Lord.

Nrisimha Jayanti (May) is celebrated in the temple. About 100 local people congregate. Dhanurmāsam, is celebrated from 15th December to 14th January. During this period, every day, about 30 people visit the temple. The hereditary priestess runs the temple with the help of a brahmin, who worships the Lord every day. The source of income to the temple is from the rent of the shops, attached to the temple and from the contribution of the devotees. The income from the shops is Rs. 130/-per month. Every day, about 15 people visit the Lord.

9. Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Śwāmy is on the top of the small hillock in Kummari wādī street, Mustak Pura, Hyderābād. The sanctum (temple) is a cave formed by a big rock falling on another big rock. It is in the shape of a triangle. There are 11 stone-steps to reach the temple. On the top of the hillock, on a rock, the image of Narasimha together with Lakshmi was constructed with cement in 1980.A.D.¹⁶

It is widely believed that Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy had manifested on another rock in the cave. The rock facing east is decorated with three caste marks of Śrivaishnavas. Infront of the rock, there is a wooden pair of sandals. There is a small black stone image of Hayagreeva in the sanctum.

The priest is a brahmin who performs worship to the Lord on Friday and Satu days and also on certain festivals. Nrisimha Jayanti is the main festival which is celebrated here on a grand scale. About 200 people congregate. The temple is run by the priest with the help of the devotees. On every Friday nearly 10 people visit the temple and on Saturdays, about 20 people pay their respects to the Lord. Every day nearly five people take the 'darśan' of the Lord.

10. Narasimha Swamy Temple

This temple is situated on Kings way, Secunderābād. The image of the Lord is installed in a niche on the back wall of the sanctum, which is formed with iron-bars on three sides. It is in the mantapa. There is an open place before the mantapa. The area of the sanctum is six square feet. The remaining portion of the mantapa is 12 x 9 feet. The niche is 2 x 1 x 3 feet.

The presiding deity of the Lord is of white marble, one foot high, installed on the pedestal in the niche in Padmasana. It has rolling eyes, puffed up cheeks, prominent canine teeth

and lolling tongue. He wears a makutam and has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and śankha in his upper left hand. His two lower hands are in action opening the entrails of the demon, Hiranya Kaśipu who is lying across the lap of the Lord. Infront of the presiding deity, there are the images of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā.

The priest is a brahmin, who worships the Lord daily. The sankranti festival (January) is celebrated for twelve days. It is known as the "Utsavam" here. About 300 local people congregate everyday during this festival. The hereditary priest, who is a Brahmin, runs the temple from the liberal contribution of the devotees.

Every saturday 'bhajana' (reciting the name of the Lord with music) is performed by nearly 15 people from 8.00 P.M. to 12.00 mid night. Every day about 20 local people visit the temple, morning and evening.

11. Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple is situated in Nala bazar of Secunderābād. It is stated that Gampa Shāyana had constructed this temple 200 years ago.¹⁷ The entrance to the temple faces the east. There is another temple of "Āṇḍāl" which is in the side-mukha mantapa of the temple. There is also a front mukha mantapa before the sanctum. A standing image of Hanumān faces the Lord in the mukha mantapa. There is a Rāmānujakūṭam (Kitchen of the Lord) behind the sanctum and a circumambulatory passage around. The sanctum is 7 1/2 x 4 1/2 feet. The area of the front mukhamantapa and of the side mukhamantapa, are 6 x 7 1/2 and 19 1/2 x 28 1/2 feet respectively.

The image of the Lord 2 feet high, is of black stone, standing on a pedestal in the sanctum. He has rolling eyes, lolling tongue, and puffed up cheeks. He has open mouth and his teeth are visible prominently. He wears a makutam and

has three caste-marks of vaishnavas on his fore head. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and śankha in his upper left hand. His two lower hands are in 'varada posture'. On the left side of the Lord, is a black stone image of Lakshmi, 1 1/2' in height. She has two hands, holding a lotus in her right hand and hanging down her left hand. She has a straight silver 'namam' on her fore head. Over these two images of the Lord and of his consort, Lakshmi, there is a silver prabha,

There is a black stone image of Garuda Alvar on the right side of the Lord. In front of the presiding deity, there are copper utsava idols. The other idols in the sanctum are of Narasimha and Chakra perumāṇḍu.

Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here. The priest is a Śrivaishṇava. The daily programme is as follows :

1. Suprabhātam 6-30 A. M.
2. Abhigamanarādhnamu 7 30 - 8-15 A. M.
3. Śātmurai 8 15 - 8-30 A. M.
4. Iijya Āradhana 10-00 - 10-45 A. M.
5. Sahasranāmārchana 5-30 - 6-30 P. M.
6. Pānaka (Jaggery water) Aradhana 6-30 - 7-30 P. M.
7. Kōṭi Archana 7-30 - 8-30 P. M.
8. Śātmurai 8-30 - 9-00 P. M.

Śātmurai is forbidden nearly for a month from kritika Nakshatram of Vishāka māsam, to Hastami Nakshatram of Makara masam (December-January) at this temple. Abhishēkam the Lord is performed on every 'Swāti' Nakshatram. The annual Brahmotsavam is celebrated from Ārdra to Swāti Nakshatram in phālguna māsam for ten days.

The programme is as given below :

	Morning	Evening	Day
1.	—	Ankurārpaṇam	Chaitra Śudha Navami
2.	Dhwajārōhaṇam	Bhēri Puja	Chaitra Śuddha Dasami

3. Surya Prabha	Chandra Prabha	Chaitra Śudha Ekādasi
4. Garuḍa Sēva	Shēsha Vāhanam	Chaitra Śuddha Dwādasi
5. Venna tali	Hanumanta Sēva	Chaitra Śuddha Tra- yodasi
6. Mōhini Avatāram	Kalyāṇōtsavam	Chaitra Śuddha Chatu- rdasi
7. Vēṇu Gōpala Avataram	Gajavāhanam	Chaitra Śudha Pour- nima
8. —	Rathōtsavam (car festival)	Chaitra Śuddha Bahula Pāḍyami
9. Totti Tiruman Janam (Abhishēkam)	Hayavāhanam	Chaitra Śuddha Vidiya
10. Avabritam	Dwādaśa Aradhana and Dhwajāvarōhaṇam.	Chaitra Śuddha Tadiya

About 500 local people congregate on the day of car festival. The other festivals celebrated in this temple are :

1. Ugādi, the Telugu New Year day (April)
2. Tirunakshatram of Rāmānuja on Ādra of Mesha māsam (April - May).
3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May)
4. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Vēdanta Yatindra maha Dēśikulu, the 44th Jeer of Ahōbila maṭham on Hastami in Simha-māsam (August)
5. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Ādivan Śatha gōpa Yateendra Mahā desikan, the first Jeer of Ahōbila maṭham, on Jyeshṭha in Kanya māsam (September- October)
6. Vijaya Dashami (October)
7. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Vēdanta Maha Dēśikulu, on Sravaṇam in Tulā māsam (October-November)
8. Deepavali (November)

9. Kārtika Pournami (November)
10. Tiru nakshatram of Veera Raghava Śaṭha gōpa Yateendra Mahā Deshikulu on Purvābhādra in Kārtikamāsam (November)
11. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Raṅganātha Śaṭha gōpa Yateendra Mahā Desikulu, the 40th Jeer, on Viśhākha in Mārgaḷi māsam (December-January)
12. Tiru nakshatram of Lakshmī Nrisimha Śathagōpa Yateendra Mahā Deśikar, on Purvabhādra in Mārgaḷi māsam (December-January)
13. Tiru nakshatram of Śrī Sri Raṅga Śathagōpa Yateendra Mahā Deśikulu, on Purvābhādra in Makara māsam (January-February)

The patron of the temple is Śrīman Śathagōpa Vedanta Mahā Deshikulu, the present and the 44th Jeer of Ahōbila Matham. The main source of the income to the temple is from the contribution of the devotees. The priest and his assistant, appointed by the Ahōbilamath perform worship to the Lord under the supervision of the Chairman, appointed by the Mutt.

Daily, nearly 50 people visit the temple and on Saturdays and festivals, about 100 people, visit temple.

12. Narasimha Mandir

The temple is situated opposite to the Kāḷi temple, in the Mahankāli Street, Secunderābad. It is stated that nearly 200 years ago, this temple was constructed by Giridhāri Dās.¹⁸ There are two other small temples of Śiva and Hanumān in the same compound. Besides, a small temple of Hanumān faces the Lord. There is a gopuram on the sanctum of the temple, with different images of gods. This is a mutt founded by Giridhāri Das.¹⁹

The temple consists of a sanctum and mukha mantapa, The sanctum is 6 x 6 feet and the area of the mukha mantapa is 21 x 21 feet. The Lord is in stilled on a raised platform which is 3' in height, attached to the back wall of the sanctum. He has open mouth, lolling tongue and protruding eyes. He wears silver 'Kora meesālu' and has three caste marks (nāmās) on his fore head, He hangs down his right leg. He folds the left and Lakshmi is seated on it. The Lord has four hands, holding chakra in his upper right hand and śaṅkha in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya mudra and the left, going round the waist of Lakshmi, is in varada hasta. The Lord is seated on a pedestal. This is a copper idol. The Lord and his consort, Lakshmi, are 1 1/4' and 6" in height, respectively. To the left of Lord Narasimha, there are marble stone images of Krishṇa and Rādha. To the right side of the Lord, there is an image of Rādha in marble. To her right, there is a black stone image of Krishṇa. The other idols are of Bālāji and Krishṇa. There are also Sālagrāmas there.

Nimbārg tradition is being followed here. The priest is a Śrivaishṇava. The principles of Jagadguru Śrī Ji Mahārāj of Kishan gad, the fourth Nimbārg Jagad guru, are followed here in the worship of the Lord.

Every day 'abhishekam' is performed to the Sālagrāmas and worship is done to the Lord twice in a day, morning and evening. The following festivals are celebrated in the temple. They are :

1. Ugādi (Telugu New Year day - April)
9. Śrī Rāma Navami (April)
3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May)

The special feature of Nrisimha Jayanti is that a person, decorated with ornaments like Narasimha, goes round the temple.

4. Hanuman Jayanti

A new flag with the emblem of Hanuman is hoisted up on the Dhawaja Stambha (Flag staff).

5. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Jayanti on Rōhiṇi Nakshtram in Simha māsām (August)
6. Vināyaka Chaviti in Bhādrapada māsam (September)
The Lord, in his incarnations, is decorated profusely.
7. Dhanur māsam (15th December to 14th January).
This festival is celebrated for a month worshipping the Lord in early morning and offering 'Pongali' as 'naivedya' to the Lord, every day.

During this festival, every day, nearly 30 devotees take the 'darśan' of the Lord in the temple.

The temple is run by the priest. The source of income to the temple is from the house-rent. The temple owns some shops and buildings and gets monthly rent. Daily, nearly 20 people visit the temple and on Saturdays the number of devotees goes upto about 100 approximately.

13. Narsing Mandir

It is situated in Jeera Street, Secunderabad. It is also a math. It is stated that this was founded by Mahant Bāba Hari Dāsji of Rājasthān 200 years ago.²⁰ The temple has a sanctum with an open place before. The sanctum is 3 x 3 feet. There are tombs of 'gurus' also.

The idol of Lord Narasimha is of copper metal, installed on the pedestal in the sanctum. He is 2' in height. The Lord is standing. He has rolling eyes, and lolling tongue. He wears a makuta. The Lord has two hands only. His right hand is in abhaya posture and the left is in "Varada hasta". The other images in the sanctum are of Kṛṣṇa and Hanumān. There is a circumambulatory passage around the sanctum.

Nimbarg tradition is being followed here. The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Every day worship is done to the Lord in the morning. The following festivals are celebrated in the temple.

1. Ugādi (April)
2. Śrī Rāma Navami (April)
3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May)
4. Hanumān Jayanti (May)
5. Śrī Krishṇa Jayanti (August)
6. Vināyaka Chaviti (September)
7. Dhanurmāsam (December-January)

The temple is run by the priest with a monthly rent from the shops attached to the temple. Every day nearly five people visit the temple. On Saturdays, about 10 people pay their respects to the Lord. On festival days, about 20 people take the 'darsan' of the Lord.

KARIMNAGAR DISTRICT

Karīmṇagar Taluk

1. Narsīmlapalle (Nandagiri-Kōṭṭa)

The village is situated at a distance of 27 KMS from Karīmṇagar, the head quarters of the district. The most interesting and exciting feature is the rare sculpture of Panchamukha Ugra Narasimha with sixteen hands opening the entrails of Hiranyakaśipu, carved on a boulder.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple is on mid-way to the hill near the village.

There are no historical or literary evidence relating to the temple except the ruined walls of a fort on the hill. Some information has been gathered relating to the temple from the local people and in particular from the priest of the temple.

Traditional origin of the temple is as follows.²¹

“In ancient days, it was a thick forest. At that time, a ruling king, by name, Nanda constructed this temple and worshipped the Lord on the hill. Years passed by. Once the Lord appeared in the dream of Kaluvakōṭa Krishnaiah, Dēshpāṇḍya of Rāmaḷugu and revealed His existence on the hill. Then the Dēshpāṇḍya cleared off the forest and constructed the mukhamanṭapa of the temple. It happened nearly a hundred years ago.”

The hill is situated at a distance of two hundred years from the village. The temples of Lākshmī Narasimha Śwāmy and Sita Rāma Swāmi are on mid-way to the hill. There is a simha dwara on the hill, which faces the south. There is also a twelve pillared kalyana mantapa with an area of 10 1/2 square feet, where the marriage ceremony of Lord Narasimha takes place. There are ruins of the walls of ‘Dharmaśālas (choultries) in the premises of the temple. There is a ‘kōṇēru” on the hill to the east of the temple.

The temple consists of a sanctum and the mukhamanṭapa. The sanctum is a cave formed by a big rock which is, it self, the roof of it. The door of the garbhagriha faces the west. The garbha griha is divided into two parts, the first part containing Lord Narasimha swāmy and the second part, to the right of the Lord, containing the nine Āḷvārs of stone installed on a raised platform. To the right side of the Āḷvārs, there is a trench, it is stated, which leads one to the kōṇēru. The black stone images of the Āḷvārs are Pōygai, Pudattār, Pēy Āḷvār, Tirumāḷisai, Nammālvar, Kulaśekara, Periāḷvār, Toṇḷara-dippodi Āḷvār, and Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār.

The first part of the garbhagriha is exclusively for Lord Narasimha Swamy. It is believed that Lord Narasimha had manifested on a rock. Straight from the image of the Lord, upwards, is the roof of rock, where the mouth of the Lord is sculptured. To the left of it. is a sankha and to the right, is a

chakra. These figures are believed to be the manifestation of **Narasimha**. This sculpture faces the ground.

The Lord is installed on a raised platform in the sanctum. This is a black stone image. Around the image of the Lord, is 'śilā prabha' which is carved on the stone slab. The height of the prabha including the sculpture of the Lord is 4' in height. The ten incarnations of the Lord are carved on the stone-prabha from right to left. They are Matsya, Kurma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Rāma, Bala Rāma, Parashu Rāma, Buddha and Kalki. The image of the Lord is 3' in height. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right-hand and the conch is in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and the lower left hand going behind the waist of Lakshmi, is on her left breast. The Lord is seated. On his left lap, Lakshmi is seated. The right leg of the Lord is on the 'Peeṭham' bending from the knee. He wears a makuta, haras and rings to his hands and legs. His mouth is open and his ears come ahead. The Lord is decorated with silver eyes and moustache. Lakshmi's right hand is in 'abhaya posture', holding a lotus with fingers. She holds probably a Kalaśam in her left hand. She bends her left leg and rests her hand on the knee. She wears a makuta, 'haras', ear rings, armlets and anklets, and a girdle around the waist. The height of the image is 1 1/2'. A brass prabha covering is placed over the stone prabha of the Lord. The utsava idols of copper are installed in front of the presiding deity. The other idol is chakra teertha swāmi. A big conch and sālagramas are also there.

The sculpture of Pancha Mukha Ugra Narasimha

A rare sculpture of pancha mukha Narasimha²² with sixteen hands opening the entrails of Hiranyakaśipu is carved

on a big boulder, which is on the roof-rock of garbha griha. One can approach this sculpture through the roof of the mukha mantapa and enjoy the beauty of the sculpture. The Lord sits on a pedestal. It appears that Narasimha has five heads and sixteen hands. The middle head (central head) is broken, but it can be seen. The two heads, on the right, have open mouths. The other two on the left, are broken and abraded.

Right side of the hands from top to the bottom.

- 1st hand holds chakra
- 2nd hand holds some thing, which is not visible properly.
- 3rd hand 'abhaya' posture
- 4th hand is not visible
- 5th hand is not visible
- 6th hand holds the head of the demon
- 7th hand is on the head of the Hiranyakaśipu
- 8th hand is opening the entrails of Hiranyakaśipu.

To the right of the Lord, Prahlada stands wearing a crown and behind him is Hanumān standing.

Left hands from the top to the bottom

- 1st hand holds some thing which is not visible
- 2nd hand holds śankha
- 3rd hand holds probably 'Aṅkuśa' weapon
- 4th hand is in Varada posture
- 5th hand is broken
- 6th hand is broken
- 7th hand is broken
- 8th hand is on the stomach of Hiranyakaśipu

There are three sculptures of different persons under the left hands. Hiranyakaśipu is laid on the lap of the Lord. The

left leg of the Lord bending from the knee is on the stomach of the demon, who, it appears, unable to tolerate the pain, raised up one of his legs. The Lord wears 'hārās', and rings to the wrist and arm. The height of the sculpture is 6' and the breadth is 4'. This awe-inspiring sculpture is known as Panchamukha ugra Narasimha Swamy.

Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. Daily abhishēkam is performed to the Sālagrāmas. On the days of the festivals and annual celebration of the Lord, Abhishekam is done to the Lord. The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava.

The Brahmotsava of the Lord takes place from Chaitra Śudha Ekādaśi to Bahuḷa vidiya (April). The special features of Brahmōtsvam are 'Dōpu' on pūrṇima and the car-festival on the night of Pādyami. Local and neighbouring Hindu people attend these special functions. The congregation of the devotees is 500 and more. The general Hindu festivals are also celebrated at this temple.

The temple is run by the temple committee, with a few lands attached to the temple.

Generally 10 to 15 people visit this temple daily, who belong to the local and neighbouring villages. They offer silver "Nāmās", (three caste-marks) eyes, moustache (kōra Meesalu) to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. There is a stream of the devotees particularly in the month of śrāvaṇa on Saturdays and Mondays in the second half of the month. During these days, the number of visitors to the temple, exceeds one hundred daily.

2. Nagula Malayala

It is situated at a distance of 16 Kms from Karīmṇagar, the district head quarters. There is a temple of Narasimha swāmy, on a hillock, near the village. The priest is a sātani-Vaishṇava. Pāncharātra āgama is followed here. The annual

festival of the Lord is celebrated for five days from Vaiśākha śudha Ekādaśi to pūrṇima (May). Local Hindus take part in it.

3. Yelgandal

It is situated at a distance of 9 kms from Karimnagar, the district head quarters. It was the district headquarters till 1905.

There is an inscription and some information has been gathered from interviewing the local persons and in particular from the priests. There is an inscription on a stone slab found at chintāmaṇi tank, at Yelgandal, which belongs to Chaunda preggada of Malyāla dynasty, who was a subordinate of Gaṇapati-dēva of kākatiyas. The inscription is dated as Ś.1124, Duṇḍibi (A D. 1202). It refers to the gift of land to conduct the 'aṅga raṅga bhōgas for Narasimha dēvara of Yelgandula. The latter portion of the inscription is abraded. This is an un Published inscription.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The hill is near the village. There is a fort on the hill, which is in a ruined condition. There is a mosque on the top of the hill. After the mosque, at a lower level, there is a Narasimha temple on the hill, facing east. There are two hundred forty one steps to approach the temple on the hill. The premises of the temple is 12 x 13 1/2 feet. The garbha griha is built with stones. There are three separate rooms in the garbha griha. The central one is 3' x 3'.

There is a rock, which forms the back wall of the central room. There is nothing to be seen on the rock except the "three namas". the three car'te marks of the Vaishṇavas. It is the firm belief of the local devotees that "the rock with Nāmās" is the form of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy.

There are two Satani vaishnava priests who worship the Lord on the hill. The priests worship Lord Narasimha Swāmy on Saturdays and Mondays of "Śrāvaṇa" month of Telugu year (August). The devotees, particularly of the local area, visit the temple on Saturdays and Mondays of "Śrāvaṇa" (August) of Telugu year. During the month of sravana, the local people go for picnic on the hill and pay their respects to the Lord.

4. Bejjanki

It is situated at a distance of 35 km from Karīm-nagar, the district head quarters.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is on a hillock, which is at a distance of three furlongs from the village. The hill is called "Bejjanki Bāṇḍa". The area of the curved surface on the hill is estimated to be about ten acres which affords accommodation to a huge crowd of devotees during the carfestival. The temple is on the southern edge of the hill.

There is no archaeological or literary evidence relating to the temple. Some information relating to the temple has been gathered from interviewing the local people and in particular from the priest of the temple. There are two temples on the hillock. One is of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy and the other of Śiva, which is in a ruined condition. There is a kōṇēru (water pond) on the hill.

To the north-west of the temple, at some distance, there is a stone-pillar, 39' high, called "Āṇḍalu Stambham". The devotees, after bathing in the "kōṇēru," go round the pillar for some time believing that it fulfills their desires. Near this pillar is a choultry, which is of recent construction with cement

roof. There is also an old choultry near the temple, constructed with stones. To the east of the temple, there is a Simhadwāram, which is the main entrance to the temple. There are one hundred and eighteen rock-cut steps to approach the temple from the simhadwāra, which was constructed in the year 1973, as it was written on it, with the image of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy. There is a car-shed (Rathasala) on the right side of the simhadwaram. The car is very big having five storeys.

The main temple on the hill is of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy consisting of sanctum, antarala and mukhamantapa. There are rock-cut steps from the Simhadwāram on the ground to the temple on the hill. The Simhadwāram faces the east. There are three entrance-gates to the temple from the east, south and the west. The main entrance to the temple is from the south. There is a rich sculpture on the pillars of the mukhamantapa in the temple.

There is a big rock, the end of which, forms like a cave, which is in the garbha griha of the Lord. It is in the corner behind the consecrated image of the Lord, to his left side. The area of the cave is 3 square feet with a depth of 1 1/2' into the rock. It is believed that Lord Narasimha Swāmy manifested Himself on the rock, which is the back side of the cave, facing the south-west. On it, the three 'Nāmās' are clearly visible. At a distance of 1 1/2' from the rock where the Lord had manifested, there are two foot prints of the Lord, sculptured on a rock, and are worshipped by devotees.

The black stone image of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy with Lakshmi on his left, lap, is installed. It was consecrated in the temple in the month of April 1974.²⁸ Over the head of the Lord, is a five hooded-serpent. The prabha around the image is sculptured on the same slab of stone. The image is

2 1/2' in height. The lord has four hands. He holds *chakra* and *śankha* in his upper right and left hands respectively. His lower right hand is in *abhaya* posture. His lower left hand is on the waist of *Lakshmi*. He bends his left leg at the knee and *Lakshmi* is seated on his lap. His right leg, bending from the knee, is on the tail of the serpent. The Lord is seated with *Lakshmi*. He is in the form of man-lion. He has long mane and wears a *makuta* on his head, two 'hāras' and 'Dhōti'. There are three 'nāmās' on the face of the Lord. The Lord has silver "kōrameesalu" (silver moustache). *Lakshmi* holds a Lotus in each of her two hands. She is sitting on the left lap of the Lord and rests her two legs on a flower. *Lakshmi* wears a *makuṭa* and a 'hāra'. In front of the Lord, to his right side, is the black stone idol of 'udayavarulu' and to the left of the Lord, is the black stone idol of *Nammālvār*.

Worship is done to the Lord according to *Pāñcharātra Āgama*. Every day "ābhishēkam" is performed to the "Sāla-grāmas". There are five *vaiṣṇava* priests, who worship the Lord by rotation.

Adhyana Utsavam is celebrated to the Lord from *chaitra śuddha saptami* to *Navami* (April). The annual celebrations of the Lord commence from *chaitra śuddha saptami* to *bahula vidiya*, (April) for the period of eleven days. "Baṇḍa Seva" (*Shaktōtsava*) and the car-festival attract the attention not only of the local people, but also of people from other districts. The 'Shaktōtsavam' or 'Baṇḍa sēva' is celebrated on *chaitra pūrṇima*. Decorated carts drawn by decorated bullocks, are taken round the hill. On *pūrṇima* night a big car of the Lord is taken round the hill in a big procession. The devotees hold flaming torches, known as "Divities" during that night. When the Lord is seated with his consort on the car, the devotees offer their gifts to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. Gene-

rally the devotees throw coins on the car. Before and after the car procession, the devotees visit the lord climbing through the wooden ladder. Though it is a bit difficult, yet the "Darshan" of the Lord fills the hearts of the devotees with peace and pleasure. About twenty thousand devotees local and from distant places congregate without distinction of caste or creed. A fair is held near the hillock. The temple is run by the temple committee, with a few lands attached to it.

The devotees, in great number, visit the temple on the hill during the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) of Telugu calendar. Particularly, on Saturdays of Śrāvaṇa, the number of visitors goes up to fifty. On other days of Śrāvaṇa, nearly thirty people visit the temple. On other days, except Śrāvaṇa month and utṣava days, nearly ten people visit the temple daily. Local and other people from distant places visit the temple with a view to celebrating the hair-cutting ceremony of their sons or daughters and offer "Silver Kōrameesalu", cash and kind as their offerings to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. They give the name of "Narasimha" and Narasamamma to their sons and daughter respectively, if they are born with the blessings of Lord Narasimha.

5. Sanigaram

Sanigaram is situated at a distance of 29 KMS from Karimnagar, the head quarters of the district.

The temple of Narasimha swāmy is on the hill at a distance of one kilometre from the village. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village also.

There is an inscription and some information has been gathered from interviewing the local people and the priest of the temple. The inscription is on a stone pillar on the tank bund of Shanigaram.²⁴ The name of king, mentioned in the

inscription was sultan Abdulla Qutb Shah (1626-1672). It states that according to the farman of the sultan, his officer, named Syed Muzafar Sarkha, granted a sum of 107 honnus gold coins to the Havaladar Menavi Beg for patronising the Brahmins of Narasimha Kshētra as usual.²⁵

The temple on the Hill

The temple of Lord Narasimha Swamy is on the hill. There are eight stairs of stone to reach the temple. Under a big rock, the garbha griha of the temple is formed, which is a cave. The area of the cave is 18 x 9 feet and 4 1/2' in height. The Lord is sculptured on a big boulder, which is 4 1/2' high. The Lord is 3' in height. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra and sankha in his upper right hand and left hand respectively. His lower hands are not clearly visible. He is standing on a pedestal.

The black stone image of Nammalvar is to the left of the Lord on a separate peetham (plat form) at a distance of 3 feet from the Lord. The cave faces the north.

The Temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the village

The temple consists of a sanctum, antarala and mukha-mantapa. The image of the Lord is the black stone with Sila-praba around it. This is a single slab of stone. Over the stone prabha, there is a bronze prabha. The image of the Lord is 3' in height. He has four hands. He holds the conch in his upper right hand, and the disc is in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in "ābhaya mudra" holding a lotus with his fingers. His lower left hand holds the club. He is standing on a pedestal.

In front of the Lord are the utsava idols of Rāma, Sita and Lakshmana, and in front of them, are those of Āṇḍāl, Narasimha Swāmy along with Lakshmi, Krishna, Udayavara

and Manavāla maha muni. There are six black stone Ālwāra. The six Ālwārs are Nammālvār, Tirumaḷisai, Kulasekhara, Periālvār, Tondaradippodi and Tirumangai Ālvār.

The garbha griha is 6 x 6 feet and the antarala is 6x4 1/2 feet. There are twelve pillars in the mukha mantapa of the temple, The area of the mantāpa is 15 x 9 feet. The front two pillars of the mukha mantapa have rich sculpture.

The priest is a satani vaishnava. Pāncharātra Agama is followed here. The Lord on the hill is worshipped on saturdays only. But there is daily worship for the Lord in the temple of the village. The same Priest attends at both places. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated on "vaisāka pūrṇima (May). "Dola utsavam" is celebrated on kāma dahana pūrṇima. The Lord comes out of the temple, on the horse-vehicle on Dasara evening. During "utsavam of the Lord", He comes out of the temple on a vehicle for the 'Darshana' of the local people.

The priest is a hereditary trustee. He runs the temple with donations from the local people. The villagers visit the hill during the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) particularly on Saturdays and on Mondays and offer 'cocoants' in fulfilment of their vows. During these days, the number of devotees, particularly local people, is about twenty. During the annual festival, about 100 local people congregate. The temple on the hill presents a pleasant and peaceful atmosphere to the visitors with a large view of green fields before the temple and a big tank on the left of the temple with abundant water. All these things make the place lively and holy to the visitors.

6. Chelapur.

It is situated at a distance of 8 KMS from Karimnagar.

There is a rock decorated with "three names," worshi-

pped as Narasimha Swamy. It is at the foot of the hillock, and is known as "Tapāla gutta," which is at a distance of three furlongs from the village. The Lord is known as "Tapāla Narasimha Swamy." A satāni vaishṇavā is the priest, who worships the Lord. Local people visit this hill on Saturdays of Śrāvaṇa of Telugu calender year (August).

There a tradition about this Lord Narasimha²⁶, which is widely popular among the local and neighbouring villagers.

"Five years ago, when the stone-cutters went to the hill to cut the stones for the lower Mānēr dam, which is under construction, at Karimnagar, two of them died immediately, when they attempted to cut. The hillock is near the site of the dam. Consequently the plan was abandoned and another hill though it is far from the site of construction, was chosen for their purpose".

7. Cherla Boothkur.

It is situated at a distance of 9 Kms. from Karimnagar.

There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy on the outskirts of the village. A satāni vaishṇava is the prest of the temple. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from chaitra śudha vidiya to pūrṇima (April) for 14 days.

8. Koorella.

It is situated at a distance of 38 Kilometres from Karimnagar town. There is a cave temple on the outskirts of the village. The image of Pratāparudra Singaraiah in the form of Lord Narasimha Swamy is on a hillock in a cave. It is belived locally that Lord Narasimha Swāmy appeared in a dream to Emperor Pratāpa Rudra Dēva of Kākatīya dynasty during the latter's expeditions in these areas and ordained him to instal His image in the cave here. The deity is there-

fore, called after him. It is also said that once a seer called Guṇḍōbaba visited this place and blessed it with divine powers.²⁷

There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in a cave on the hollock near the village. The priest is a brahmin. The annual festival is celebrated for a day on pushya Bahula Amāvāsya (January). It is confined to this and the neighbouring villages. About 5000 people, of all communities, congregate.

9. Ramancha.

It is situated at a distance of 26 KMS from Karimnagar. There is a temple of Narasimha in the village. Narasimha Swamy carved in human form on a huge boulder, is worshipped here.

The priest is a srivaisnava. Pancharatra Agama is followed here. The annual festival is celebrated for one day on chaitra śuddha purnīma (April). It is confined to this village only. About 200, Hindu devotees congregate.

10. Nallagonda

It is situated at a distance of 16 Kms from Karimnagar. There is a temple on the small hillock, in the village, which is dedicated to the god Narasimha Swamy. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. A satāni is the priest of the temple. The annual festival is celebrated for eight days from phālguna śuddha Ekādaśi to Bahula Tadiya (March). It is confined to this village.

11. Gannervaram

It is situated at a distance of 17 Kms from Karimnagar. There is a temple of Lord Narasimha Swamy, in the village. The priest is a brahmin. The annual festival is celebrated for seven days from chaitra śuddha Navami to purnīma (April). Carts and bulls are decorated on the day

of procession and are taken round the temple. It is of local significance.

SIRCILLA TALUK

1. Nallagonda

Nallagonda is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Sircilla, the taluk headquarters. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the hill, which is at a distance of one kilometre from the village.

There is no archaeological or literary evidence relating to the temple. Some information is gathered from interviewing the local people and the priest of the temple in particular. There is a tradition relating to the origin of the temple. It says that the temple priest, Kanjerla Rama char'y's great grand father consecrated the stone image of Narasimha and Lakshmi on the hill about 150 years ago and the temple was built by Rāmāchārya, the priest. at the behest of the Lord in a dream.²⁸

The main temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is on the hill. The utsava idols are installed in a room at the foot of the hill, which was built recently. There is a mukha mantapa which is built recently. It is 24' x 18'. Before the mukha mantapa, there are a koneru, a car and a car-shed. There are also some choultries for the pilgrims.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is on the hill. There are three hundred sixty steps leading to the temple.

Manifested Cave of the Lord

It is said²⁹ that the Lord had manifested Himself on a rock, which is like a cave. The cave is 4 1/2' in height. There is some sculpture on the rock, which forms the back wall of the small cave. The area in the cave is 3 x 4 1/2 feet. The

sculpture of the Lord is not properly visible. There are three 'nāmās'. The sculpture and the door of the cave face the south. Near this rock cave, there is a kalyāṇa mantapa with sixteen pillars, where the marriage ceremony of the Lord takes place,

The Temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

After the Kalyana mantapa, on a rock at some height, is built the temple with sanctum and mukha mantapa. The area of the mantapa is 12 x 18 feet. The garbha griha is built with stones. It is 6 x 4 1/2 feet.

The black stone image of Lord Narasimha Swamy is installed on a platform at the back wall of the temple, along with the black stone image of Lakshmi. The Lord holds chakra and Shankha in his upper hands. The two lower hands have a lotus each. The image of the Lord is 2' in height and that of Lakshmi 1 1/2'. The Lord and His consort are standing on a "Pitham." Before image of Lord Narasimha Swamy, Chennakēshava Swāmy is installed on a separate platform. The temple faces the east. There are nine Āḷwārs, five of them face the south and the remaining face the north in the sanctum. The nine Āḷwārs are Pōygai, Pudattār, Pēy Āḷwār, Tirumāḷisai, Nammāḷvar, Kulaśēkhar, Periaḷwār, Tondara diṇṇṇṇai and Tirumāṅgai Āḷwār,

There are two vaishnava priests, who follow Pāncharātra Āgama in the worship of the Lord here. The annual celebrations of the Lord proceed from Māgha purnīma to Bahula chaviti, for a period of five days (February). Before the annual celebrations, the Adhyayana utsavam is celebrated for three days, from Māgha Śuddha Saptami to Navami (February). The special features of the annual celebrations are the procession of the Lord on the big elephant vehicle and the car-festival.

The temple is run by a committee. There is no land for the temple. The liberal contributions of the devotees are the main source of the income to the temple. Admission to the temple is on payment of ten paise per head. Every day 20 to 30 devotees visit the temple. But during the annual celebrations, about five thousand devotees local and from neighbouring villages, congregate. Generally the devotees come to perform the haircutting and the marriage of their sons or daughters. They offer rice, coconuts, silver nāmās, silver rings and Bāṣiṅgālu to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. The devotees pay for the vehicle of horse on which the lord takes joyful riding, which is in fulfilment of their cherished desire. This temple is famous among the neighbouring villages.

2. Nampally

The village is eight kilometres from Sircilla, the headquarters of the taluk.

The temple on the hill is at a distance of two furlongs from the village, Nāmpally. There is neither archaeological nor literary evidence to support the view, which is widely spread, that this is an ancient temple. There is yet a tradition, which says that the stone image of Lord Narasimha Swamy on the hill was installed by the Nava-Nātha Siddhas (nine ascetics)⁸⁰. There is an other tradition according to which the place was connected with the tragic legend of Sāranga dhara, the son of Rāja Rāja Narēndra.⁸¹ But it is difficult to accept this, as Rāja Rāja Nārēndra reigned at Rājamahēndravaram, which is far away from this place. The local people generally believe that this temple was improved during the reign of King Rāja Rāja Nārēndra.

There is a 'Siva' temple at the foot of the hill which is in a dilapidated condition. There are two "Dharma

gundams" on the hill, one near the Hanumān temple and other near a boulder, known as sārangadhara boulder, which was supposed to have been thrown on him. On the top of the hill is the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy. To the left of the temple, at a distance of 50', there is a cave, which is known as 'Navanātha Siddhula guha.' There is a tradition³² that the nine ascetics (Navanatha Siddhas) were the brothers-in-law of Rāja Rāja Narēndra, who constructed the temple of Narasimha and the cave of the Navanatha Siddhas. There are nine black stone images in it. There is a boulder to the south-east of the temple, which is locally known as 'Pacheesuguṇṇu,' where the local people believe³³. Rāja Rāja Narēndra played 'Pachheesu,' a favourite game of Telugu women. At present there are two "chadarangams" inscribed on a rock. There is a trench to the south of Navanatha Siddha's cave, which, it is belived, leads to Vēmulawāḷa.

The bath in lower koneru is cosidered auspicious. So the devotees take bath in it before visiting the Lord.

There are 497 steps to approach the temple of the Lord, which is on the top of the hill. The temple consists of a sanctum, antarala and the mukha mantapa. The mukha mantapa of the temple consists of ten stone pillars with an area $13\frac{1}{2} \times 15$ feet. Garbhagriha is $7\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The back side of the Garbhagriha is formed by a rock. There are two stonepillars in it. The roof was built on the two pillars.

Sculpture of Lord Narasimha Swamy

It is believed that Lord Narasimha manifested Himself on a rock at a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ ' to the left of the consecrated deity. The depth and the area of the rock where the Lord is supposed to have manifested are $2'' \times 2'' \times 3''$.

The scripture is not visible. The priest said that there was a rift to the rock, and the Lord manifested Himself in the rift itself. This Lord, is considered to be the main deity. Daily 'abhishēkam' is performed first to this deity and Later on to the conscreated deity.

Consecrated stone image of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

The black stone image of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is installed on a raised platform. The height of the image is 1 1/2'. He holds disc and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. He holds a lotus in his lower left hand and his right hand is in varada posture. The Lord is standing on a 'peetham', The brass 'Makara Torana' is above the deity. On the lower part of the 'peetham' are the utsava idols of Narasimha with Lakshmi on his left thigh and Āṇḍāl to the left of Narasimha, which are made of copper. On a wooden table, below the peetham of the Lord, are installed the stone images of Nammālvār, Śrī Vēṅkatēshwara Swāmi, and Sāla-grāmas.

The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. The pāṇcharātra Āgama is being followed here. Everyday 'abhishēkam' is performed to the Lord. The general festivals are being performed as in the case of other temples. Adhyayana utsavam is celebrated in Dhanurmāsam for three days from the day of marriage ceremony of Gōḍadēvi (December-January). The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated on the hill for nine days from vai-shakha śuddha Trayodaśi to Bahula shasti (May).

There is a temple committee which runs the temple from the income through the lands attached to the temple and from the liberal contribution of the devotees.

Generally there is a stream of visitors to this temple, throughout the year, as the devotees, who visit Śrī Rājā Rājēshwara temple at Vēmula-wāḍa, generally pay their visit to this

temple on the hill. The devotees offer silver moustache and "Nāmās" to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. There is a heavy rush of the visitors during the months of Chaitram (April), Vaishākham (May), Śrāvaṇam (August), Mārgaśira (December), Pushyam (January) and Māgham (February). Particularly during the month of Māgham (February), there is a flow of visitors not only from the neighbouring villages and districts, but also from other states like Mahārashtra and Madhya pradēsh. On all Saturdays there is a rush of visitors, particularly in the month of Śrāvaṇa (August). The people who get children by the grace of the Lord, name their sons after the sacred place of the Lord, Nampally. The influence of the Lord is not restricted to the district of Karimnagar, but it spreads to the other districts of Telangana area. The name of the persons and of the place can be found in Hyderabad city as well. The names of Nāmpally can be found almost in all the districts of Telangāna. This speaks of the influence of the place in Telangāna in general.

3. Tangallapalli

Tangallapalli is situated at a distance of one kilometre from Sircilla, the head quarters of the taluk. Mānēru, a tributary of river Gōdāvari, flows by. The temple is on a hillock on the western side of the village at a distance of four furlongs.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

The temple facing east is very small, constructed over the self manifested Lord Narasimha on a rock in 1959. The rock is 6' x 4' and the garbha griha is 9' x 6'.

Nothing is visible on the rock, except the "Three Nāmās", of the Vaishnavas.

The priest is a srivaishnava who is hereditary. Pāñcharātra Āgama is followed here. The priest conducts the worship to the Lord in the month of Śrāvaṇa, (August).

On every saturday of 'Śrāvaṇa' (August) about 50 devotees visit Lord Narasimha Swāmy. During the month of Śrāvaṇa, the devotees pay their respects to the Lord Narasimha Swāmy. During the month of Śrāvaṇa, the devotees along with their families come to the hill to visit the temple and enjoy the picnic there. The number of devotees, who visit the temple during the month of Śrāvaṇa is 50 or more every day. The local and neighbouring villagers rarely visit this temple in other months and they worship the Lord in the absence of priest.

METPALLE TALUK

4. Medipalle

Mēdipalle is situated at a distance of 19 Kms. from Metpalli, the taluk headquarters. There is no historical or literary evidence in relating to the temple. Some information is gathered from interviewing the local persons and from the priest of the temple in particular.

The Temple of Lord Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

The temple, 1/2 Km. from the village, consists of sanctum, antarala and mukha maṇṭapa facing north. The area of the garbha griha is 6 sq. ft. The Lord is seated on a 'peetham' of stone which is 2 1/2' in height.

The black stone image of the Lord is 2 1/2' in height. There is a śila 'prabha' around the image of the Lord which is carved on a single slab of stone along with the Lord. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and sankha in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is on his right knee and the left hand on his left knee. He sits crossed legged with the Yōga-paṭṭa going round his knees. The mouth is open. He has puffed-up cheeks. There is a makuta

on his head and a 'halo' over his head. The Lord is known as Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy.

The front room before the garbha griha known as antara is 4 1/2' x 6'. On a raised platform attached to the walls, black stone images of Ālvārs, one foot high, are installed. Five of them face the east and the remaining five face the west. The five Ālvārs, who face the east, are Pōyagai, Pūddatar. Pēy Ālvār, Tirumālisai and Nammālvār. The five Ālvārs, who face the west, are Kulisēkhara, Periālvār, Tondara dippoḍi Ālvār, Tiruppān Ālvār and Tirumaṅgai Ālvār. The area of the mukha maṇṭapa is 15 square feet. It has sixteen pillars. The priest is a satani vaishnava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here.

Abhishekham is performed daily by the priest. The annual festival of the Lord is performed for a day on śuddha Ekādaśi of Āśviyuja (October). Nearly five hundred local people congregate on the eve of the festival. The four priests of the temple are hereditary. They worship the Lord and enjoy the lands that are attached to the temple.

The devotees perform 'Hair cutting ceremony' of their sons before the Lord. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) the number of visitors daily is more than twenty and on saturdays of Śrāvaṇa, the number is approximately thirty.

2. Vellulla

Vellulla is situated at a distance of 3 Kms to the south of Maṭpalli, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy here. The pūjari is a Brahmin. The annual festival is celebrated for 10 days from Āśviyuja śuddha pādyami to Daśami (October). Hindus congregate.

3. Peggerla

Peggerla is situated at a distance of about 15 kms from Maṭpalli. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy at a distance

of two furlongs from the village. The annual festival is celebrated for one day on chaitra śuddha pādyami i.e. Ugādi, the Telugu New Year day (April). Decorated Carts are taken round the temple five times.

4. Dumpeta

Dumpeta is situated at a distance of 19 kms. from Metpalli. The temple of Lahshmi Narasimha Śwāmy is on a hillock near the village.

Lord Narasimha is depicted in the form of man-lion killing Hiranya Kasipu. He has four hands, A smārta brahmin is the priest of the temple. The annual festival is celebrated for six days from vai hāka śuddha Dāsami to Purnima (April). About 4000 people, local and from the neighbouring villages congregate. A fair is held for seven days in this connection.

JAGTIAL TALUK

1. Tungur

Tungur is situated at a distance of 26 Kms from Jagtial, the headquarters of the taluk. There is a temple in the village, where there is an utsava idol of Narasimha Swāmy in the form of man-lion.

The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated on the Beerpur hillock which is near the village from Māgha śuddha Ekādaśi to Bahula śaṣṭi for eleven days (February). About 20,000 devotees, local and from the nearby villages congregate.

2. Beerpur

Beerpur is situated at a distance of 45 Kms from Jagtial.

Beerpur (Lakshmi) Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple of Narasimha Swamy is on the hillock, outside the village. It is belived that Lord Narasimha Swamy had manifested Himself on a rock along with Lakshmi seated on his lap. The sanctum is a cave. Infront of this sculpture of the Lord, there is an idol of Narasimha Swamy along with consort, Lakshmi. There is mukha mantapa before the sanctum. Before it, there is a kōnēru. The utsava idol of the Lord is installed in the temple at Tungur village.

The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival is celebrated for ten days from Māgha Śuddha Ekādasī to Bahula Panchami (February). About, 20 000 devotees, local and from the neighbouring places congregate irrespective of caste or creed. The chief patrons are Śrinivaishṇavas, who run the temple.

3. Charlakondapur (Hamlet of Rāikal)

The village is situated at a distance of 19 Kms from Jāgtiāl. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. It is known as Nullāgoṇḍa Narasimha swāmy temple, which is a popular hilltemple in Sircilla taluk.

The pujari is a Gouda with hereditary rights. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for three days from Phālguna Bahuja Vidiya to Chaviti (March). About 600 devotees, local and from the surrounding villages. congregate.

4. Gopalpur

Gōpālpur is situated at a distance of 22 kms from Jagtial. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava, Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here.

5. Chinnapuram

Chinnapuram is situated at a distance of 16 kms from Jagtial.

There is a temple of **Narasimha Swāmy** on the hillock, nearby the village. The priest is a **Dāsari**.

6. **Lingapuram**

Lingapurām is situated at a distance of 17 1/2 kms. from Jagtiāl. There is a temple of **Narasimha Swāmy** in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for five days from **Māgha Śuddha Dwādasi** to **Bahula Pādyami** (February)., About 2,000 people, local and from the neighbouring villages congregate.

7. **Gourapuram**

Gourapuram is situated at a distance of 21 kms from Jagtiāl. **Narasimha Swāmy** in the form of a stone-image on a rock, is worshipped with no temple. The priest is a **sātani-vaishnava**. **Pāncharātra Āgama** is followed here. The people worship the Lord during the month of **Śrāvaṇa** (August).

8. **Namila Konda**

Namilakonda is situated at a distance of 26 kms. from Jagtiāl. There is a stone-image of Lord **Narasimha Swāmy** on the hillock near the village. The procession images are in the house of the priest in the village, Daily worship is performed and "Naivēdyam" is offered to the Lord. Local people visit the Lord, in particular, during the month of **Śrāvaṇa** (August)

9. **Dharmapuri**

Dharmapuri is situated at a distance of 30 kilometres from Jagtiāl town and 65 kms from Karīm-nagar. It is on the western bank of the river **Gōdāvari**, which flows by the village from North to South forming a natural boundary between **Karīm-nagar** and **Ādilābād** districts. There are two temples of **Narasimha** in the village known as **pāta** (old) **Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy** temple and **kotta** (new) **Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy** temple. The other temples in or on the outskirts of the

village, are of Śrī Vēṅkaṭeśhwara Swāmi, Gautamēśhwara, Satyāvati, Rājēśhwara Swāmi, Śrī śītā Rāmachandra Swāmi, Śrī Dattātrēya, Śrī Mahālakshmi and Hanumān. There are a number of Śiva Pañchāyatanas, consisting of Śiva, Pārvati, Gaṇapati, Nāgēśhwara and Ānjanēya, in the village. There are Brahma pushkaraṇi, Chintāmaṇi Sarōvaramu, (tank), Varāha teertham (tank), Vimala Sarōvaram (a tank), which are holy and pilgrims take bath in them. There are other holy places (ghats) for bath on the bank of the river Godavari. They are Brahma Guṇḍam, Chakra teertham, Yamaguṇḍam, Vaśiṣṭha Guṇḍam, Sātyāvati Guṇḍam, and Gōpikāteertham (Gollamaḍugu).

We have archaeological and literary sources which help us to know about Dharmapuri and the temple of Narasimha.

The following are the archaeological sources,

- a. Inscription of kurkyāla (Karīmṇagar district) by Ari-kēsari II of Chālukyas of Vēmulavāḍa.
- b. Inscription of the Rāmēśhwara temple of Dharmapuri relating to Vikramāditya VI of Kalyāṇichālukyas and the inscription of Kākatīya Gaṇapatidēva on the same stone.
- c. Inscription at Brahmapushkaraṇi of Dharmapuri by Jūpalli Dharmārāya.

LITERARY SOURCES

The following are the literary sources.

Sthala Puranas

1. Dharmapuri Kshētra Mahātmyam, a sanskrit palm leaf Manuscript with 105 chapters (Brahmāṇḍa purāṇāntargatam), dated Ś-850 (=AD 928).

2. Dharmapuri Kshētra Mahātmyam, a Sanskrit Manuscript (Skānda purāṇāntargatam, dated 1767 AD.)

Secondary sources

1. Dharmapuri kshētra Mahātmyamu in Telugu by K. Sadēśiva Śāstri 1956 & 1979, and

2. Dharmapuri kshētra Mahātmyamu in Telugu by M. Shyāmā Sundara Śāstri; 1970.

Literary works

1. Padma puraṇōttara khaṇḍam of Māḍiki singana
2. Chitra Bhāratamu of Chaligoṇḍa Dharmanna
3. Simhāsana dwātrinsika of Koravi Gōparāju
4. Nārāyaṇa śatakamu of Pōtana
5. Kaḷāpūrṇodayamu of Piṅgaḷi Surana
6. Nrisimha, Narahari and Nrikēsari śatakas of Śēshappa.
7. Rōhilāla pāṭa and Myrāvaṇa Charitra of Narasimha Dāsu and
8. Mss. with S. Narahari of Dharmapuri

History of the Place

Dharmapuri is one of the famous centres of pilgrimage in Telāṅgāṇa. It was known earlier as Dharmārya, Dharma-puram, Dhamman puram, Dhammanvura, Dharma vura and Dharmapuram.

We have literary evidence indicating the name of this place as Dharma puri and Dharma puram in the two sthala purāṇas both entitled "Dharmapuri kshētra Mahatmyam". one dated 928 A.D.⁸⁴ and the other dated 1767 AD.⁸⁵ It is stated that the former is Brahmāṇḍa purāṇāntargatam and the latter Skanda purāṇāntargatam. Historically we find the name of this place in an inscription of Arikēsari II (930-955 AD) of Chāḷukyās of Vēmulavāḍa, at Kurikyala of Karīmṇagar taluk and district. This place was known as Dhammanvura⁸⁶ and

Dharmapuram.³⁷ Further we are able to see the name of this place as Dharmapuri and Dharmapura in an inscription of Vikramāditya VI (1076-1126) of Chālukyas of Kalyāṇi on a stone in the Rāmēshwara temple at Dharmapuri. It records the gifts to the god Rāmēshwara.³⁸ Besides this, mention is made of this place as "Dharmapuram" in his Uttara khanda of Padmapurāṇa by Maḷiki Singana,³⁹ who wrote it in 1420 AD.⁴⁰ The great Telugu poet Bammara Pōtana (1400-1470) mentioned this place as Dharmapuri in his Nārāyaṇa śatakam.⁴¹ It is believed that this śatakam was written by Pōtana⁴² who flourished during 1400-1470 AD⁴³. Again this place is also mentioned by Koravi Gōparāju (1430-1490) in his Simhāsana-dwātrīnshika,⁴⁴ who lived during 1430-1490 AD.⁴⁵ Pingaḷi Surana, a renowned Telugu poet mentioned this place as Dharmapuri in his "Kaḷāpurnodayam."⁴⁶ Veereshalingam pantulu says that he lived about 1560.⁴⁷ In 19th century Shēshappa⁴⁸ wrote a śatakam on Narasimha of Dharmapuri, who lived about 1800.⁴⁹ Another poet, Narasimhadāsu wrote 'Rōhilāla pāṭa' in 1858,⁵⁰ where in the sorrows of the victims of Rohillas at Dharmapuri are described. Thus, the name of the place was mentioned by Shēshappa and Narasimhadāsu in 19th century A.D. In modern period this place is mentioned among others, by Puri Nārāyaṇa Rāju, who lived when P. Vijayarāma Gajapati Rāju was ruling the Samantana of Vijayanagaram. He wrote "Dharmāṅgadachaitra", which is also known as "Pāmu-pāṭa," where in the importance of river Gōdāvari at Dharmapuri is given mentioning Dharmapuri, a sacred place.⁵¹ During the present century, the name of Dharmapuri is popular as a centre of pilgrimage and Vedic learning in Telāṅgāṇa area.

According to the inscription of Kurikyāla of Karimnagar district, during the period of Arikēsari II of Chālukyā of

Vēmulaṇḍa (930-955), Arikesari II granted Dharmapuri as an agrahāra to Pampa, who was his court-poet, and it was described as 'Dvijāvasadha grama.'⁵²

A political change took place with the defeat of Dommarāja of Bhadrachalam and Mailigidēva of Polavāsa by Rudradēva of kākatiyas. This was confirmed by his inscription on a pillar in the thousand-pillard temple at Hanumakoṇḍa, dated 1163 AD. Dharmapuri came under the fold of the Kākatiyas. Ganapatidēva gave certain gifts to the god Rāmeswara. It is attested by his inscription in the Śiva temple, which is dated Ś-1158 (=1246 AD.)²⁰ By this time, there are many inscriptions of the names of pilgrims on the rock in the river Gōḍāvari at Dharmapuri.²¹ The pilgrims, who visited Dharmapuri, engraved their names on the rocks. Thus, we may presume that by that time, Dharmapuri, was more or less a centre of pilgrimage in Telangāna.

The Kakatiya sculpture on the four pillared mantapa in old Narasimha Swāmy temple is an unperishable evidence of the Kākatiya rule at Dharmapuri. After the fall of Kākatiya in 1323 AD. this area was under the control of the Muslims from 1323 to 1336 AD for a short period. Musunūri Kāpayya became the king of Warangal after defeating the Muslims in 1336 AD.²² He then appointed his kith and kin to the important posts.

Among them was Muppa Bhupāla, son of Gurajāla Telugu Nripala, as the head of the Sabbinādu, to the south of river Godāvari, with Rāmagiri (Karīm-nagar district) as his capital.⁵⁶ Kēsana was his minister. His brother was Kaṇḍanāmātya. To him, Maḷikisingana dedicated his 'Uttarā Khanda' of Padmapurāna' (Padmapuranottara khandaṁ).⁵⁷ In it, the poet described the gifts made by Kēsana to the god Narasimha and a choultry was constructed at Dharmapuri by him.

“Atulita kēsa sachivagrani Dharmapurambu nandu nan Chitamuga nanna satramidi Śrī Narasimhunn Kutsva-mbulan”⁵⁸ “The noble minister, kesana, had given gifts for maintaining ‘anna satram’ (feeding house) and conducting the utsavas (celebrations) to the god, Śrī Narasimha at Dharmapuri.”

It was said by Maaiki Singana in his book that he completed that work in 1420 AD⁵⁹. During this period, Paramahansa Parivrājākāchārya Nārāyaṇashramulu, a saint, came to this place and reconstructed the village and a ‘Maṭh’ after his name, Nārāyaṇapuram and built some houses for the brahmins, who settled there.⁶⁰ The Māṇḍalika Gande Dharmārāya repaired the temple and consecrated the image of Narasimha in the temple.⁶¹ Consequent to the Muslim invasions in the 14th and 15th centuries, in 1448 AD, a new temple consisting of sixty pillars was constructed and Narasimha was consecrated in it.⁶² During the Qutb Shah dynasty of Golkonda, Dharmapuri attained its glory. Jupalli Dharmārāya of Velama chiefs constructed a vēdika (plat form) in the middle of Brahma pushkarani and built the steps around it, according to an inscription on a pillar of the mandapa in the Brahmapushkarani at Dharmapuri, dated 1567 A.D. (63) It also records the construction by certain Tirumalaya, son of chintala Narusabōyi, of the compound wall around the pushkarani and the mandapa on the vedika (plat form) of pushkarani. Abul Hasan Qutb Shāh of Gōlkonda was liberal to the Hindus and appointed them to the highest posts also. Mādanna, (Madhō bhānuji surya prakash Rāo) the well-known minister of Abul Hasan had gifted lands to the brahmins of Dharmapuri village for the conduct of daily worship and ceremonial rituals to the god Narasimha Swāmi of Dharmapuri. These documents are now known as ‘Munagāla Chidrupayya panatula vari and Vajjalavāri patra-

mulu (documents).⁶⁴ They bear the official stamp of Mādāna and the date of issue of these documents is 1676. Abul Hasan continued his liberal policy towards Hindus till the conquest of Gōlkoṇḍa by the Mughals in 1687. After the fall of the Qutb Shahis of Golkōṇḍa, the era of anti-Hinduism was heralded by the Mughal emperor, Aurangazēb. He was an uncompromising and oppressive emperor, who followed vigorously the policy of religious aggrandisement against the Hindus. His subordinates also followed in his foot-steps. Rustumdilkhām, the Subēdār of Hyderābād converted the temple of Narasimha of Dharmapuri into a mosque on 5th Rabi'auval, 35th Julus of Aurangazēb (=1693 AD) and appointed Abul Hasan Faras as 'Moujan' and granted lands to it. Even now it is a mosque. The Subēdār issued a 'farmān' to this effect. This document is known as Syed Fate Ali's document. This is a manuscript.⁶⁵ The scales became upset in the early part of the 18th C. Mubārizkhan, the Subēdār of Hyderābād, during the reign of Farooq Shiyar (1713 – 1719) of Mughal dynasty, bestowed the title of 'Dēs-mukh' on Juvvāni Chokkā Rāo, with the right to enjoy the pargāṇās of Polāsa and Deevakoṇḍa. Later on, Chokkā Rāo granted many gifts to the temple and worshipped Narasimha of Dharmapuri.⁶⁶

With the defeat of Mubāriz Khān at Shakkar Khēd by Nizamulmulk in 1724 AD,⁶⁷ that Deccan came under the rule of Āsaf Jāhi dynasty from 1724–1948 AD. The Nawabs in general followed the policy of religious toleration. During 1724–1750 the people of Dharmapuri constructed a temple which was known as pata (old) Nrisimha temple in the village.⁶⁸ In 1794 AD. Chennamanēni Jōgarāya, a great land Lord, made gift of silver ornaments to Lord Narasimha and made flooring with stones inside of the enclosure of the

temple.⁶⁹ The Gande dynasty known as Gandevaru of veligandula and Rāmagiri circars and Juvvādivaru (the dynasty of Juvvāḍi), who were the Dēshmukhs of Polāsa and Deevakonda Parganas, made hereditary arrangements for the celebration of the marriage ceremony of Lord Narasimha every year.⁷⁰ This process of patronising the temple by the noble and the landlords went on unabated. Panatula Nārāyaṇa Deekshitulu, a well-known charitable person, built a new (kotta) temple at Dharmapuri in Ś-1725 (=1803 AD.) and consecrated the image of Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha in it.⁷¹ Juvvāḍi Dharma Jagapati Rao, a Dēshmukh arranged all the facilities for celebrating all the rituals and festivals throughout the year and he worshipped Lord Narasimha of the new temple.⁷² During the period of Afzaluddaula, the Nawab of Hyderabad, the Rohillas plundered the people of Dharmapuri in 1838 (kāḷa yukti, kartika bahula Daśami, Mangala Vāramu). The miserable condition of the people of Dharmapuri was aptly described by the poet, Narasimha-dāsu in his work entitled "Rōhilāla pāṭa."⁷³ In the same year on puḥya bahula Ekādaśi, the ritual of samprōkshana (cleansing ceremony) was performed in old and new temples of Narasimha at Dharmapuri.⁷⁴ After some time in 1890 AD. (Vikriti) Nāmīle Kishan Rao, a Dēshapāṇḍya had erected a silver pandiri (Pandal) in the sanctum of the temple of old Narasimha Swāmy, under which the Lord is seated on a pedestal. This we can now see in the temple. He also gifted utensils to the kitchen (Rāmānuja kutamu) of the Lord.⁷⁵

The works of Shēshappa, made Dharmapuri popular throughout Andhra Pradesh in the 19th century. He belonged to Dharmapuri of Karimnagar district.⁷⁶ He was a great devotee and dedicated his life to the cause of Lord Narasimha of Dharmapuri.⁷⁷ He lived about 1780 AD.⁷⁸ K. Gopala Krishna Rao supports the view with slight difference. He says that he

lived about 1800 AD.⁷⁹ The poet wrote 'Narasimha Śatakamu', 'Nrikēsari Śatakamu', 'Narahari Śatakamu', 'Dharmapuri Rāma-yaṇamu,' 'Avanija charitramu' and bhajana keertanas.⁸⁰ (devotional songs). 'Narasimha Satakamu' was first published in 1868 AD.⁸¹ The line ending with each verse in this śatakam is very famous through out Āndhra Pradēsh,

"Bhushaṇa vikāsa Śrī Dharma Pura nivāsa, Dushṭa saṃhāra Narasimha durita dura.'.

Dharmapuri is not only a centre of pilgrimage, but also a centre of Vedic studies and renowned Sanskrit scholars came from this place during 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, Dharmapuri is one of the oldest villages flourishing as a centre of pilgrimage and Vedic studies in Telangana. There are many temples of Śiva and Viṣṇu including a number of panchāyatanas in the village. However, Lord Narasimha, the main deity of this place, occupies a predominant position in the hearts of the people.

Sthalapurana of the place

The sthala purana of Dharmapuri can be known from the literary source mentioned earlier.

There is an unpublished palm leaf manuscript in Sanskrit with the title 'Dharmapuri Kshētra Mahātmayamu-Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇāntargatamu' describing the puranic story and the greatness of Lord Narasimha Swāmy in detail. The story runs like this.

"The Avtara of Narasimha is very famous and important one. Hiranya Kaśipu, having obtained protection from death by the grace of Brahma, invaded on 'swarga' of Indra and became the sovereign of it. He enjoyed what he wanted there. After some time, he had a son, who was a staunch devotee of

Lord Vishnu, from his birth. His son, prahlāda, was always uttering the name of Vishnu, but it was displeasing to him. He pursued his son not to speak of Vishnu, who was his enemy. In his endeavour, he put his son untold hardships and tortures. The barbarious and cruel atrocities committed by his father, Hiranya Kaśipu, on him knew no bounds. The Lord Vishnu there fore, took on the incarnation of Narasimha (Man-Lion) and killed the demon king, Hiranyakaśipu, who was an ardent devotee of Lord Śiva. He prayed to the Lord Śiva to come to his rescue in the last moment. Lord Śiva, who was famous for his kindness to his devotees, responded forthwith to the call in the crisis of hour on the part of his devotee and took the shape of a 'śarabha' and fought with Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha (Man-lion). Then Lord Narasimha exerted his self the full wrath and fury which he was capable of and killed the śarabha. Even after killing the śarabha, the Lord could not control him self and was wandering with that fearful aspect in the forest of Daṇḍakāraṇya. All the gods became very much frightened at his terrific aspect (ugrarupa) and they approached Lord Brahma to suggest some means to pacify the ugra Swarupa (aceful form) of Lord Narasimha. Lord Brahma did penance for a long time in the Daṇḍakāraṇya. At that time, a king by name, Dharm varma, son of Balavarma, who was ruling that part of land, on the advice of Vishnu sharma, a pious brahmin' set out for doing penance there with intense devotion to pacify Lord Brahma. After some time Dharm Varma pacified Lord Brahma with his penance, Brahma appeared before him and asked him to continue his meditation to pacify Lord Narasimha, who was fierce to look at Him. Brahma, along with Dharmavarma and other gods, began to meditate on Vishnu. He did sacrifices to Lord Vishnu. At last 'Ākāśavāni' (celestial vice) told Brahma that Prahlāda

and Nārāda would pacify Śrī Hari. When Brahma called them, the great devotees, prahlada and Narada in 'anjali mudra' appeared before him and they asked him what to do for him. Brahma said that there were none dearer to the Lord than them. He asked them to go to Svētadvīpa, pacify, Lord Viṣṇu, and bring Him to this world in the interest of the people. They saluted Brahma and went to Svētadvīpa accordingly. Then they praised Narasimha in various ways. At last Narasimha became pacific. Pleased with the penance of Brahma and Dharmavarma, Lord Narasimha came to Dharmapuri to the west of pushkarani and permanently settled there in his "Soumya rupa" (peaceful form).

There is group of four temples in side the enclosure. They are pāta (old) Narasimha Swāmy, kotta (new) Narasimha Swāmy, Vēṇu Gōpala Swāmy and Vēṇkateshwara Swāmy temples. To all these temples, there is only one simhadwāram (main entrance), with a 'gōpuram', which was recently built with figures of different gods on it. It faces east.

Kotta (New) Narasimha Swamy Temple

This temple is new, because there is an old temple, dedicated to the god Narasimha.⁸² This new temple is also dedicated to the same Lord. It was built by Paṇatula Nārāyaṇa Deekshitulu in Ś.1725 (=A.D. 1803) and the image of Yōgānanda Lakshmi Nrisimha was consecrated in it,⁸³ and it is extremely popular with the pilgrims.

There is a tradition, which is widely current among the local people.⁸⁴ It states that Lord Narasimha appeared in the dream of certain Gande Velama doras and revealed them that, He was in a cave of "Gandevāri guṭṭalu" (Gande hills), near Vengalapuram of Jagitial taluk, twenty miles from Dharmapuri. The image of the Lord was brought to Dharmapuri in accordance with the principles of Āgamaśāstra and consecrated it in

a new shrine. Hence it is called kotta (Nutana or new) Narasimha Swāmy of Dharmapuri.

Facing Lord Narasimha, at the dhwaja stambha, Jāmbavanta is standing. Vināyaka, Indra, Agni and Garuḍa are standing to the north-east, west, south-east and to the north respectively. The sanctum is partitioned by a wall, which is 3' high. The front portion is 'antarāla' and the back portion is the sanctum of the Lord.

The presiding deity of this temple is Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy. The Lord is seated on a pedestal in Yogic Posture. Below the 'āsana' of the Lord, Ananta, Viśvaksēna and Garuḍa are sculptured. There is a very famous ślōka (verse) in Sanskrit, traditionally transmitted, that reveals that the 'āsana' of the Lord is Ādiśeṣha and that the Lord is residing near Gautami i.e. Godavari at Dharmapuri. The ślōka is :

“Pavanāsina Peetaya,
Gautami teera vāsini
Śrīmad Dharma Pureeshāya
Śrī Nrisimha Yastu maṅgaḷam”

There is no source for it, which is orally and traditionally transmitted from generation to generation.

Lord Narasimha is carved on a black stone with 'śilā prabha' around him. On it, the incarnations of Viṣṇu and the figures of Narasimha are worked out. He is seated cross-legged and has four hands. He holds chakra and śankha in his upper right and left hands and his lower two hands are stretched forward resting on the knees. His face is that of a lion and is in an awful form. He wears a makuta and hārās. The Lord has an open mouth and long canine teeth. Under the left arm of the Lord, on the śilā prabha, Cheṇchu Lakshmi is sculptured. On the śilā prabha of the Lord, there is a silver prabha. The

image of the Lord is 4' in height. On the lower part of the pedestal of the Lord, Nammalvar is sculptured.

To the left of Lord Narasimha at some distance, Lakshmi is seated on a separate pedestal, holding chakra and śankha in her upper hands and lotus buds in her lower hands. Lakshmi is also sculptured on a black stone with 'śilā prabha' surrounding her. There is a brass prabha on the śilā prabha. She hangs her right leg and folds the left at the knee sitting on a pedestal. The image of Lakshmi is 2 1/2' in height. Before the Dhruvabēra of Lord Narasimhā, there is an utsava idol of Lord Narasimha Swāmy with Lakshmi seated on his left thigh. Over it, there is a silver prabha.

The sanctum and antarala are equal in size. The inside roof of the sanctum is star-shaped. There is a circumambulatory passage around the sanctum of the Lord in the temple. On either side of 'antaraal', Ānjanēya in 'anjali mudra' is standing face to face. The front portion of mukhamāṇṭapa has sixteen stone pillars and nine pillars on other sides of the sanctum. The area of the mukha mandapa is 16 1/2 x 3 1/2'. The inside roof over the central four pillars is star-shaped and a flower is engraved in the centre. The rituals and festivals are similar to those of the old (pata) Narasimha Swamy temple and twelve hereditary priests, in turn, perform worship in the two temples of Narasimha.

Old (Pata) Temple of Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

The most important and famous temple in Dharmapuri is the old temple of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, the incarnation of Lord Vishṇu. The village Dharmapuri is said to be one of the oldest villages in the state.⁸⁵ Among the images of Vishṇu, the Nrisimha is considered to be ugra-mūrti (awful form).

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image of the Lord is 4' in height. On the lower part of the pedestal of the Lord, Nammalvar is sculptured.

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The terrific images must always have their temples invariably out side the village and the yōga-form of Viṣṇu must be enshrined in a temple built far away from the village on the banks of the rivers, on hill tops and in forests recesses. The worshipper of the yoga-image, certainly desires to have a calm place for concentrating his thoughts on the object, which he intends to worship. Hence he desires that temple to be away from human habitation and vibration.

In accordance with the Āgama Śāstra, ~~the temple of~~ Dharmapuri was constructed on the bank of the river Gōdāvari. This region in olden days was known as Daṇḍa kāraṇya. So in the fitness of things, the temple of Narasimha was constructed here. According to the Āgama śāstra, the setting up of an 'ugramūrti' in the midst of the village is strictly prohibited. If it happens, a sānti mūrti (peaceful image) should be set up before it to counter act its evil effects or at least a tank must be dug in front of the temple, so as to pacify the terrific god. As the present temple is in the village, not only an image of Bhakta Anjaneya was set up before the god, Narasimha, but also seven images of Ānjanēya were established on the other seven sides of the temple, inside the prakara (compound) wall. This is known as " Hanmad aṣṭadigbandhana (establishment of the Hanuman images to the eight sides) so as to pacify the ugra aspect of god Narasimha,

The present temple, was built by the villagers of Dharmapuri during 1724-1750 A.D.)⁸⁶ It appears that this temple was constructed in three phases. The sanctum is of 7 1/2 x 12 feet. The four pillars supporting the roof of the sanctum are not similar to each other. The inside roof of the sanctum is star-shaped.

The presiding deity of this temple is Yōgānanda Lakṣmī Narasimha wāmsy. The Lord sits on a pedestal. He has

four hands, holding chakra and śanka in his upper hands, and stretching his lower hands forward resting on his knees. He sits cross-legged with his left leg on the right. His mouth remains open widely. He has rolling eyes, lolling tongue and puffed up cheeks, which give him a fierce look. The god wears a hāra of sālagrāmas, kanṭhābharāṇa and hārās of Sālagrāmas to the wrists, shoulders, and arms. He also wears a U-shaped kirīṭa on his head. The deity is 3' in height. Chenchu Lakshmi is standing on his left thigh. She is 3/4' high.

The story of Chenchu Lakshmi is nowhere mentioned in any Purāṇa except in folk-lore. But we find the story in a Sanskrit drama, 'Vāsaṇṭikā Parinayamu' written by Vain Śaṭha-gōpa Yatindra, the seventh head of Ahobila maṭh, who lived in the last part of 16th A.D.

The legend of Chenchu Lakshmi is current among the tribal people even now.

Chenchu Lakshmi is believed to be an incarnation of Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Viṣṇu. When Lord Narasimha Swāmy killed the demon-King, Hiranyakasipu, His wrath could not be controlled. The god was wending with terrific looks in the Daṇḍakāranya, a thick forest. She, therefore, took birth in a chechu family and later on married Narasimha. Thus, she appeased His wrath. When the tribes realised that their child was no other than Lakshmi herself, they adopted her as their tribal goddess. The image of the Lord is carved on a slab of black stone, making room for 'Prabha' which is known as 'śilā prabha'. On the 'śilā prabha, from the right to the left, are worked out the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, i. e. Matsya, Kurma, Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana, Paraśurama, Śrī Rama, Balarāma-Krishṇa, Buddha and Kalki. In the sanctum, under a silver Pandiri, with the roof of silver bars, supported by four silver pillars. Lord

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Yōgānanda Narasimha Swāmy is seated on a pedestal. At a distance of 1 1/2' from the image of Lord Narasimha to the left, the image of Lakshmi is seated on a separate pedestal, Lakshmi is carved on a block stone together with Prabha around her. She has four hands. She holds lotus-flowers in her upper hands and two fruits (round shape) are in two other hands. Under her arms, on either side, the figure of woman is sculptured. They are 3/4' high. Lakshmi is 2 1/4' in height. Prahlāda is sculptured on the pillar which faces the goddess. He is 1' high. The other idols of metal in the sanctum are the utsava idols, Chakraperumāṇḍlu, Sīta, Rāma, Lakshmana, Vēṅkatēshwara, Vēṇugōpāla Swāmi and Āṇḍāl. There are black stone images of Āḷvārs in the garbhagriha, installed on a raised platform, attached to the wall. The eight Āḷvars, who face the south are Pōykai, Putattār, Pēy, Tirumālīśai, Nammalvār, Kulaśēkhara, Periyāḷvar, and Tonḷaraḍippodi. The other two are Tiruppān Āḷvār and Tiru Mangai Āḷvār, who face the east.

The Mukhamantapa is approximately 31 1/2 x 25 1/2' consisting of forty five stone pillars. The inside roof of the central four pillars, in the second row, facing the Lord is star shaped and the pillars have no sculpture at all. The interesting feature of this temple is the installation of the image of Brahma in the mukhamantapa, to the right, which is a very rare occurrence in the temples. He faces the south, of which he is the Lord. He has three faces and four hands. The upper hands have a book and a 'mala' in each hand and one of his lower hands supported on gada and 'Daṇḍamu' is in other hand. He is 6' in height. The sthala purāṇa of Dharmapuri mentions the importance of Brahma at this place. The Brahma Puḥkaraṇi of this place is named after him. The story runs like this. 'Even after killing the demon-king, Hirayakaśipu, Lord Narasimha became so furious, that He was unable to control Himself.

All the gods became frightened at his terrific aspect. In order to appease him, Brahma dug a koneru (water pond) and did penance for a longtime in the Daṇḍaka forest.

After the death of Balivarma, who was ruling Āndhra dēśa, his son, Dharmavarma succeeded him.⁸⁷ Disgusted with worldly life, he went to a pious Brahmin, named, Viṣṇu Śarma. He advised the King to pacify Brahma at first with his heart-felt devotion. Accordingly Dharmavarma did a great penance. Brahma, pleased with his devotion, asked him what he wanted. He desired, that Lord Narasimha be invited to settle at this kshētra of Dharmapuri in his soumya rupa (peaceful form). Brahma asked him to continue his penance to pacify Lord Narasimha. Brahma and other gods began to meditate on viṣṇu. At last Narasimha was pleased with Brahma. He asked Brahma to name a boon from him. Brahma implored Lord Narasimha that he should settle here permanently. The Lord consented to this and asked Brahma to remain with him in his temple. The Lord said that the Kōṇēru, where Brahma took bath and did penance' would be known as Brahmapuṣhkaraṇi and it would become a sacred one.

There was king Balavarma, similar to the name of Balavarma of the Sthalapurāṇa of Dharmapuri, in Āndhra Dēśa. The historical figure' Mahārāja Balavarma made some gifts when he constructed the western Mahādvara at Ālampur of mahabubnagar district, in the regnal year 1 of Dhāravarsha,⁸⁸ Dharavarsha Druva of Rāshtrakūṭas ruled his kingdom from 780-793 AD. His first regnal year is 780 AD. His feudatory Balavarma was ruling in Āndhra dēśa at that time. But we cannot identify historical Balavarma with that of puranic Balavarma of sthalapurāṇa. As the date of sthalapurana of Brahmanda purānāntargatam is Ś 850 (=A.D. 928), and Balavarma of Ālampur inscription belongs to eighth century A.D.

It is probable that the Sthalapurāṇa was written after a considerable time had elapsed from a some source of history. Thus, the sthalapurāṇa speaks of the importance of Brahma, who was installed in the mukha maṇṭapa of the temple of Narasimha at the Dharmapuri. There is an image of Bala-Rama together with 'gopikas' by the side of Brahma facing south, with his weapon 'Halāyudha'.

After the mukha mantapa, there is four-pillared kalyāṇa maṇḍapam. The sculpture on the pillars is a feast to the students of art and history. The incarnations of Vishnu, Gaṇapati and his vehicle, Mūshika, dancing women in different postures, reflect the highly developed sculpture of the Kākatiyas.

There is a "Hōma maṇṭapam" (Hall of sacrifice) to the south-east of the temple. On the walls of the Hōmamaṇṭapam, the poems of Narasimha śatakam, translated into Sanskrit were inscribed on 25th July, 1974 by Śrīman Guḍimella Varadāchāry.

At the entrance (Simhadwāram) of the temple, to the right, there is an image of Yama, which is about 6' in height facing the east. He has four hands. He holds chakra and Śankha in his upper hands. He stretched forward his lower hand and supported on the 'Gada' and the other lower hand is an abhaya mudra. There is a puranic story which states the importance of yama at Dharmapuri.⁸⁹ The story is like this .

"In order to get virtue, Yama travelled from place to place to atone his sins. At last he came to Dharmapuri and took bath in a kōṇēru. No sooner did he bathe in it than he was liberated from his sins. Then he went to the temple of Narasimha and worshipped him in a befitting way. Lord Narasimha was pleased with him and named the kōṇēru after him. Hence it is known as 'yamaguṇḍam' Lord Narasimha said that who ever had a dip in that water-pond, would be free from all trouble by Yama in other world.

Satyavati Temple

This temple is to the south of Nūtana (new) Narasimha Swāmy temple, in the village. Though the presiding deity of this temple is Śrī Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy, yet the temple is known as Satyāvati temple. There is an earthen pillar, which is about 20' in height in this temple. The Lord is, therefore, known as Stambha Narasimha Swāmy. The utsava idols are Satyāvati and Chitrāngada, who were a legendary couple. The husband of Satyāvati was a śēsha (cobra). When Satyāvati and her husband came to Dharmapuri, and took bath in the river Gōdāvari, śēsha was converted into a handsome man, by name Chitrāngada. It is believed that Satyāvati built this pillar in this temple to prove her modesty. The place, where Satyavati and her husband took bath in the river Godavari, is known as 'Satyāvatiṅguṇḍamu'⁹⁰

There are twelve hereditary vaishnava priests for both the old and new Narasimha temples. Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here in the worship of the god, Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy.

A Ghanāpāṭi (Vedic pandit) appointed by the government, recites four pannas of Yujur veda Sagumhita from 9.00 AM to 11.00 AM and Pancha suktas during Abhiṣēkam of the god in the temple.

The daily programme at this temple is as follows :

- | | | |
|--|-----|----------------|
| 1. Suprabhātam | ... | 5.00 AM |
| 2. Ārādhana | ... | 6 00 AM |
| 3. Prabōdhaki | ... | 7.00 AM |
| and | | |
| Dharma darśanam | | |
| 4. Abhiṣēkam | ... | 10 AM to 11 AM |
| Darśanam on a ticket of 0.10 paise per head from 8.00 AM to 11.00 AM | | |

5. Nivēdana ... 12.00 Noon
 5. Recess ... 1.00 PM to 4.00 PM
 4.00 PM to 7.00 PM Dharmadarśanam
 7. Archana 7.00 PM to 8.00 PM
 Ashtōttara Śatanāma and Kum Kumārchana
 8. Bhōgam 8.00 PM to 8.30 PM
 and
 Distribution of Prasādam 8.30 PM to 9.00 PM
 9. Sēva on certain days 9.00 PM to 10 00 PM
 Other wise the door is closed at 9.00 PM

The Kalyaṇōtsavam (marriage ceremony) of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmi is celebrated from phālguṇa śuddha Ekādaśi to Phālguṇa bahuḷa panchami (March) in a befitting manner. The daily programme of the annual festival is as given below.

1. Ankurārpaṇam and Varaha teertham—Ekādaśi
2. Dhvajārōhaṇam and Kalyaṇōtsavam—Dwādaśi
3. Urēgiṃpu (Procession) — Trayōdaśi
4. Hōmam and Bali haraṇa—Chaturdaśi
5. Teppōtsavam and Dōlōtsavam of old Narasimha Swāmy in Brahma pushkarini Pūrṇima
6. Teppōtsavam and Dōlōtsavam of new Narasimha Swāmy in Brahma pushkaraṇi—Phālguṇa Bahula pādyami
7. Dakshinēna digyātra — Vidiya
8. Uttara digyātra and Vēda Sadassu-Tadiya
9. Bhōga mantapam and Dopōtsavam—Chaviti
10. Rathōsvam and pushpayāgam—Panchami
11. Ekāntōtsavam—Shaṣṭi
12. Pushpayāgam of new Narasimhaswāmy—Saptami
13. Ekāntōtsavam of new Narasimha Swāmy—Ashtami

The important items of the annual festival of the Lord are kalyāṇōtsavam and Dōlōtsavas of old and new Narasimha Swamy and also Rathōtsavam (Car-festival). Nearly fifty thousand people of Andhra Pradesh and other states, particularly Maharāshtra and Karnāṭaka congregate on the eve of Dōlōtsavas of both old and new Narasimha and Rathotsavam. A big fair is held during the annual festival. In addition to these rituals, literary and cultural activities are organised throughout the festival. The other festivals, celebrated during the year are.

1. Ugadi (April)

This is Telugu new year day. On this day Lord Narasimha sitting on horse-vehicle goes round the village for the darśan of the people.

2. Sri Rama Navami (April)

It falls on chaitra śuddha Navami and Punarvasu Nakshatram. The e is a Dōlōtsava (cradle ceremony) of the Lord in the temple on this day.

3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May)

It is celebrated as the birth day of Lord Narasimha on Vaishākha śuddha chaturdaśi with Svāti Nakshatram. Dolotsavam is celebrated on this day in the temple. Most of the people on this day observe fast and visit the temple at dusk for the 'darśan' of the god.

4. Hanumajjayanti (May)

The birth day of Ānjanēya is celebrated on Vaishākha bahula Dasami with Purvabhādra Nakshatram. Then most of the local people without any distinction of caste or creed observe fast and visit the temples of Narasimha and Hanuman.

5. Toli Ekadasi (July)

It falls on Ekādaśi in the bright fortnight of Āshādam. Many local people go on fast and pay their respects to the god in the temple.

6. Srikrishna Jayanti (August)

This is the festival of the birth day of Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, which is celebrated on Śrāvaṇa Śuddha Ashtami with Rōhiṇi Nakshatram. The special feature of the festival is the 'uṭṭasēva' in the temple, which is enjoyed by one and all.

7. Vijaya Dasami (October)

It is celebrated on Āshvini Śuddha Daśami. The lord goes out to 'Śami yātra'. This festival is continued for nine days, known as 'Daśarā Nava Rātrulu'. Every day a 'sēvā' is performed. The people gather round the temple and pay their respects to the Lord.

8. Vaikuntha (Mukkoti) Ekadasi (January)

This day is celebrated on pushya Śuddha Ekādaśi. On this day, the people take the 'darśhan' of Lord Narasimha in the early morning. The Lord comes out of the temple on a vehicle for the 'darsan' of the people.

9. Dharnurmasam (December-January)

The Lord is worshipped in early morning for a month during the winter.

10. Vansantotsavam (February)

On Māgha Śuddha panchami (February), the god Narasimha starts for "Vasanta Utsavam" from the temple. All people without any distinction of caste or creed participate in it and enjoy the festival.

Every day nearly 100 people visit the temple coming from all over Āndhra Pradesh and from other states. On Saturdays, the number goes upto 200 nearly. During the months of Śrāvaṇam (August), Kārtikam (November) and Dhanurmāsam (December - January) every day nearly 300 people visit the temple. On the eve of Dōlōtsavaś and Rathotsava, nearly 50,000 people congregate. Some people celebrate Kēśa Khandana, and the marriages of their sons and daughters in the temple. It is believed that incurable diseases are cured here. One M. Nārayaṇa, who came from Nizāmabād along with his son, who was suffering from stomach-ache said that he had visited a number of hospitals, but in vain. At last he came to this temple and stayed here for forty days. In his dream a monkey appeared and gave him a fruit and asked him to leave the place. Surprisingly the body recovered his health following the day of his dream. Baśeṭṭi Vajramma, a resident of Jagtiāl, Karimnagar district, who was suffering from fits stayed here for forty days and recovered her health.

An interesting tradition here is that the devotees of Narasimha give the name of this sacred place to their sons as 'Dharmapuri' and Dharmapuri Narasimha. The extent of influence of Dharmapuri may be traced from Matcherla Dharmapuri of Warangal district. He was a staunch devotee living at Ingurti of Warangal district.⁹¹ Every year he used to go to Dharmapuri. Owing to old age he could not go there after some time and he prayed Lord Narasimha to settle there' The Lord manifested Himself on the hillock, near the village. This is the sthalapurana of the temple of Narasimha of Ingurti.⁹² Further there is a temple of Narasimha at Kalwa, Nirmal taluk, Adilabad district, known as Dharmapuri Narasimha Swami temple.⁹³ Thus the temple of Narasimha of Dharmapuri is famous through Telangana from medieval to the modern period.

SULTANABAD TALUK

1. Raghavapuram

Rāghavāpuram is situated at a distance of 13 Kms from sultānābād, the taluk head quarters. The village is also known as Dēvunipalle as Lord Narasimha swamy, it is believed, had manifested on the hillock. There is a temple of Narasimha swamy in the village. The priest is a Vaiṣṇava. Pāñcharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from Kārtika Śuddha chaturdaśi to Bahula Panchami (November) for seven days. Rathōtsavam (car-festival) is the special feature of the festival. About 5,000 devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate irrespective of caste or creed.

2. Kodurupāka

Kodurupāka is situated at a distance of about 8 Kms. from Sultānābād.

There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy on a hillock, near the village. The image is in the form of man-lion. The priest is a Śrivaishṇava. Pāñcharātra Āgama is followed here. Adhyayenōtsavam is celebrated for five days from Pushya Bahuḷa Ekādaśi to Amavāsya (January). The kalyanōtsavam of the Lord is celebrated for eight days from Māgha śuddha Ekādaśi to Bahuḷa Tadiya (February). About 3,000 devotees of all communities, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate.

PEDDAPALLI TALUK

1. Sundilla.

Sundilla is situated at a distance of three kilometres from Gōdāvarikhani on Rāmagundam - Jangaon bus route. There is a temple of Narasimha swamy in the village. The priest is a Brahmin. The annual festival is celebrated for a

day on Ugādi. The Jayanti of the Lord is celebrated on Vaishākha chaturdaśi (May).

2. Peddapuram

Peddāpuram is situated at a distance of 18 Kms from Peddapalli Railway Station. There is a temple of Yōgānada Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on a hillock. The priest is a Vaiṣṇava with hereditary right. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival is celebrated for nine days from chaitra śuddha Navami to Bahuḷa vidiya (April). The villagers are the patrons.

3. Moolasala

Moolaśāla is situated at a distance of 13 Kms from Peddapalli. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The Pujāri is a Sātani Vaiṣṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. Āradhana is performed to the Lord every day.

4. Nimmanapalli

Nimmanapalli is situated at a distance of four kilometres from Peddapalli, the head quarters of the Taluk.

Nambuladri Narasimha swamy temple

It is situated on a hillock to the west of the village at a distance of 250 metres. The temple facing east, can be reached through the Simhadwāra (main entrance) and through the stone-steps, eighteen in number on the north, which was perhaps an earlier route.

There is no archaeological evidence to support the existence of the temple and its antiquity though the tradition says that it was from immemorial times. There are only a couple of modern literary sources which speak some thing of the temple. They are :

- a. 'Manōja vijayabāha' in Sanskrit by Krishnamāchārya, Śatāvadhāni, Koruṭṭa, (Karīm-nagar district), an unpublished work, 1978.
- b. 'Nambulādri Nrisimha suprabhātam in Sanskrit by the same author mentioned above in 1978.

The former describes the car-festival of the Lord on Māgha bahuḷa vidiya (February) and the fair connected with it. The latter, praising the unusual qualities of the Lord, wakes Him up early morning every day. The author in his preface mentions that the Lord derived the name of Nambulādri Narasimha Swamy, because in the distant past sixty to hundred families of Nambulu (Priests or Archakas) worshipped Lord Narasimha on the hill. Nambulu is the name of the profession of priest-hood. They are to day known as Archakas or priests. Even today, by the name of family, Nambi, the Nambulu or priests are worshipping Lord Narasimha Swamy at Dharmapuri, Karimnagar district in Āndhra Pradesh. There is a tradition which says⁹⁴ that 'two hundred years ago, there were a hundred families of Nambulu, who worshipped Lord Narasimha on the hill. As the god belonged to Nambulu, it is known as Nambulādri Narasimha Swāmy.

In front of the temple, there is a kōṇēru (water pond), which is considered auspicious if one takes bath with its water outside of it, particularly on the hill. There is a maṇṭapa leading to the Simhadvāram. At a distance of 7 1/2 feet from the garbhagriha on the left, there are images of Lakshmi, twelve Āḷvārs, Rāmānuja and Nāthamuni in a room, in two separate portions. To the left of the Sannidhi of Āḷvārs, are the Sannidhis of Kurattāḷvār and Manavāḷa Mahāmuni, side by side. Before them, there is a Mukha Maṇṭapa with sixteen pillars, of which the central four pillars are endowed with rich sculpture. To the right side of the main entrance of the temple, there is a 'Ratha Śāla' (Car shed), which was built in 1975. The Ratha (car) is quite big with five storeys.

On the upper side of the door leading to the mukha mantapa, there is a sculpture of Gajalakshmi carved on a rock, laid horizontally on the door of the mantapa and two elephants standing on either side with trunks raised over the head of Lakshmi. There are sixteen pillars, on which stands the roof of the mantapa. It is about 19 x 16 feet. Garbhagriha is 6 x 7 1/2 feet. The sculpture of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha swāmy is carved on a rock, which is the backside of the garbhagriha.

There is a tradition⁵⁶ that the Lord, in the beginning had manifested Himself on a boulder to the west of the garbhagriha. The boulder with three 'Nāmās' can be seen on the hill. Every day worship is done here. As the place is not convenient for worship to the devotees, in the sense that it is very difficult to construct a temple on the boulder, the devotees prayed to the Lord to manifest Himself on a rock, which is congenial for worship. The Lord granted their prayer and manifested Himself on a rock, on which the present garbhagriha is built up.

The height of the Lord as sculptured on the rock is about 4' in height and 3' in breadth. There is stone prabha around the Lord. He is in the form of man-lion. He has four hands, holding disc and conch in his upper right hand and upper left hand respectively. He kept his lower right hand on his club and his left hand on the waist of Lakshmi. He kept his right leg and sat in the posture of 'Ācharya peṭham'. Lakshmi, his consort is seated on his left lap. She wears necklaces. The crown of the Lord is in a pointed shape. The Lord is decorated with silver Nāmas, eyes, ears, nose and Kōrameesalu. At a distance of 1 1/2', in front of the Lord, the utsava idols of Lakshmaṇa, Rāma and Sita are installed. Before them, are chakra perumāṇḍlu, and Sālagrāmas. The temple faces the east.

The mode of worship is in accordance with the principles of Pāncharātra Āgama. Daily 'abhishēkam' for the 'Sālagramas' is performed and "abhishekam" to the Lord is done on every Saturday and also on the day, on which the devotees pay for it. There are seven priests, who worship the Lord in turn. The general Hindu festivals and the birthdays of the Ālvārs and of some Āchāryas, which are being performed in other temples, are performed in this temple. Besides, the annual festival of the Lord is befittingly celebrated from Māgha Śuddha Ekādaśi to bahuḷa Vidiya (February). The programme of the Brahmōtsavam is as follows.

1. Kalyāṇōtsavam - Ekādaśi
2. Hōmam - Dwādaśi
3. Garuḍa Vehicle - Trayōdaśi
4. Sadasyam - Chaturdaśi
5. Homam & Baliharāṇa - Pūrṇima
6. Hōmam & Baliharāṇa - Bahuḷa pādyami
7. Rathōtsavam - (Car - festival)- Vidiya.

Nearly ten thousand people congregate on the eve of the car festival. Krishnamacharya has described the car festival in vivid manner in his unpublished book and brought out its importance.⁹⁶

The temple is run by a committee with the income from the lands attached to the temple and donations from the devotees, are an other source of income to the temple.

Daily twenty five to thirty people visit the temple, who belong to the neighbouring villages for the fulfilment of their vows. The number of devotees exceeds during the months of Chaitra (April) Vaiśākha (May), Śravaṇa (August) Māgha

(Febrnary) and Phālguna (March). The number of devotees goes upto 200 and above. It is believed by the people that the childless will get a child within a year after visiting this temple. Such people give the name of the place to their sons and daughters as Nambu, Nambaiah, Nambuladri and Nāmakka respectively.⁹⁷ Generally, every day about 30 visitors come to pay their respects to the Lord.

HUZURABAD TALUK

1. Bijagir Sharif.

Bijagir Sharif is situated a distance of 22 Kms from Huzurabad, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Nararasimha swāmy on a hillock, nearby the village. The image is in the form of man-lion. The priest is a brahmin. The people specially worship Lord Narasimha on Saturdays and Mondays in the month of Śrāvaṇa (August).

2. Ratnagiri.

Ratnagiri is situated at a distance of 11 Kms from Huzurabad.

Lord Narasimha Swamy is worshipped in the village. But there is no temple. There is a huge boulder on a hillock, near the village, bearing the image of the deity. The boulder is broken into two parts with a rift of 2 1/2 inches between them.

The priest is a brahmin. The Lord is worshipped on Saturdays and Mondays during the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) and Jātara (fair) is celebrated on the last Saturday of the month. About 1000 Hindus, local and from the neighbouring villages, participate in it. At the foot of the hillock, there are two banyan trees which are the abodes for thousands of bees. The devotees first perform "pradakshina" (circumambulation) to these trees five times and then worship the deity on the hillock.

KHAMMAM DISTRICT

1. Khammam.

Khammam is the head quarters of the district of the same name from 1953 AD. It is situated at a distance of 192 kilometres by bus from Hyderābād. It is also a Railway Station on the Kāzpet - Vijayawāḍa line of the South Central Railway. Historically Khammam is famous from the medieval times.⁹⁸ There are two temples dedicated to Lord Narasimha Swamy, one on the hill and the other in the town.

Stambhadri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple.

This temple is on the hill, which is known as stambhadri in the town. It is a cave temple. There is no historical evidence of the temple. But there are a few literary works. There is an unpublished Varāha purāṇa of Haribhaṭṭu. There is also a modern work in Telugu entitled 'Stambhādri' by Kodama Simha Satyanārāyaṇa Charya. Besides, the interviews with the priest and the devotees and others, are important sources of information.

It is believed by the local people that there is a sthala purana on the basis of a sloka (verse), which was transmitted orally from generation to generation.⁹⁹

"Kritētu sālāgrāmādhrihi

Trētāyām Nriharērgirihi

Dwāpare Stambha Śikhari

Kalāvēta ttribhihi paraihi"

According to this verse, this kshētra (place) is known as sālāgrāmādhri in kritāyuga, Nruharērgiri (Narahari giri) in

Trētāyuga and Stambha Śhikhari in Dwaparayuga. Now in Kaliyuga it goes by the three names, mentioned above.

This place is attributed to the birth place of Narasimha.¹⁰⁰ Here Lord Narasimha came out of a pillar and killed the demoning Hiranyakaśipu. The Lord is here, therefore, known as Stambhādri Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy.

We find a reference to Khammam and Nrisimha, in a medieval literary work. Haribhaṭṭu was a great poet, who lived about 1530 AD.¹⁰¹ He wrote Nrisimha purana (uttarā bhāgam) in champu kāvya style in Telugu. He dedicated his 'Varāhapurāṇa' to the village karanam, kolipāka Eṛṇā-mātya.¹⁰²

There is a tradition, which is widely popular among the local people.¹⁰³ It says that "at a distance of 32 Kms from khammam, there is a village, by name Ashtakurti, where Bhupati Venkamma, the wife of the land-Lord of Ashvarāopēṭ, was residing. One night Lord Narasimha appeared in her dream and revealed His presence on the hill, in a cave. The Lord ordained her to make proper arrangements for conducting His daily worship. The village Ashtakurti was given as Agrahara to Lord Narasimha for maintaining the temple". It is stated that it is 150 years old.¹⁰⁴

There is an entrance to the temple on the hill, which was recently constructed with figures of gods on it. There is another main entrance as we go up. On the top it, a Gōpuram is constructed with various figures of God. There are two water ponds (Konērule), one at the foot of the hill and the other on the hill. The latter is locally believed to have formed when Lord Narasimha stamped the rock with one of His feet in his enraged mood. The print of the other foot on the rock nearby, testifies the legendary belief. There is an ant-hill, near the *kōṇēru* to the back side of the temple. This ant-hill is known as "Nāgarājuputṭa". There is also an image of Vishṇu with

Brahma, who came up from the navel of the former. There is a kitchen (Rāmānuja Kuṭam) in the premises of the temple to prepare 'naiveda' (food offering) for the Lord. There is also a four-pillared kalyāṇa maṇṭapa for the celebration of the marriage ceremony of the Lord during the annual festival. It was constructed in the year 1968.

The temple of Narasimha is on the hill in a cave. It consists of a sanctum, 'antarāla' and mukha maṇṭapa. The abode of the Lord is in the cave, which is formed by a big rock, constituting itself as the roof of the cave. The rock of the cave is slope from the door of the sanctum to the abode of the Lord. The entrance to the garbhagriha is 2 1/2' in height. The Lord, it is believed, manifested himself on the lower part of the rock, which touches the ground, forming itself as the back wall of the cave. There are three separate red lines, near one another on the lower part of the rock. It is said that the central red line is that of the form of the Lord, the left to the centre is that of Lakshmi and the last line to the right side of the central line, is that of the hand of the Lord in abhayaposture.¹⁰⁵ The curved rock on the abode of the Lord, where He was manifested, is like "shēsha talpa" (serpent hood) to Lord Narasimha. The speciality of the Lord is, during the rainy season, when the kōṇēru is full of water, comes out of the navel of the Lord in the cave. The cave faces the south. The Lord is here known as Stambōdbhava Lakṣmī Narasimha Swamy.

The area of the sanctum is 18 x 8 feet and that of 'antarāla' is 45 x 12 feet. To the right side of the antarāla, the utsava idols are installed on a raised platform attached to the wall. The idol of Narasimha with Lakshmi on his left lap, is installed there. To his right side, the idol of Bhudēvi and to his left, the idol of Neeḷadēvi, are consecrated. The other idols are of Chakra Perumāṇḍu, Āṇḍāl and Vighaṇasa

Ācharya, who was the propounder of the Vaikhānasa sūtras, The area of the mukhamantapa is 21' x 24' nearly, consisting of 29 stone pillars. There is a small platform for Lord Satya-nārāyaṇa Swāmy, where the devotees worship Him now and then.

The mode of worship to the Lord is in accordance with the principles of Vaikhānasa sūtras. The Lord is worshipped three times daily. Abhiṣēkam to the Lord is performed on every pournami day. The priest is a Śrī Vaiṣṇava of Vaikhānasa sect.

Adhyayanōtsavam precedes the annual festival. It is celebrated from Vaiśākha śuddha Ekādaśi to Trayōdaśi (May-June), Paramapada utsavam is celebrated on the last day. There is a legend about an annual celebration of the Lord on the hill.¹⁰⁶ It says that "nearly eighty years ago, the utsava idols of the Lord were found in a well at Tāḷlakunṭa. Lord Narasimha revealed his whereabouts to Gōpāla Charya in his dream. The utsava idols were brought from the well to the temple of the hill. From that time on wards, the annual festival of the Lord is being celebrated on the hill." The Brahmotsavam or the annual festival of Lord Narasimha is celebrated for five days from Vaiśākha śuddha chaturdaśi to Bahuḷa Tadiya (May-June). The annual programme of the temple is as follows.

1. Dhvajārōhaṇa and the celebration of Nrisimha Jayanti - Chaturdaśi.
2. Kalynōtsavam (marriage) of the Lord-Pournami.
3. Hōmam & Bali-haraṇam-Padyami.
4. Hōmam & Bali-haraṇam-Vidiya.
5. Purnāhuti and twelve sevas of the Lord-Tadiya.

The following festivals are being celebrated through out the year in the temple.

1. Ugādi (April).
2. Nrisimha Jayanti (May).
3. Jyēshtha Pournima (June).
4. Śrī Krishṇa Jayanti (August).
5. Tīrunakshatras (birthdays) of the twelve Ālvārs,
6. Dhanurmāsam and Gōḍākalyaṇam (December-January).

The temple is run by the temple committee. The main source of the income to the temples is from the devotees, who visit it.

I interviewed some devotees in the temple to know the trend of visitors. Generally the devotees visit the temple some on particular days like Friday, Saturday and a festive day and others on their convenient days. There are a few pilgrims, who visit the temple in fulfilment of their vows and offer cocoanuts. Some people perform the hair cutting and marriage ceremonies at this temple with the presumption that they celebrate them in the very presence of the Lord.

Every day nearly forty people visit the temple. Particularly on Sunday evening, nearly 300 to 400 people visit the temple. During the annual festival of the Lord, about 1500 to 2000 Hindus, local and the surrounding villages, congregate. A fair is held on the eve of this festival.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in the Town.

There is a temple dedicated to Lakshmi Narāsimha Swāmy in the town, opposite to the hill-fort. It is stated¹⁰⁷ that "it was constructed two hundred years ago by the local Vaisnavas of Vaikhanasa sect. Chandulāl, a minister of Nawab Sikandar Ja Bahadur, the third Asafja of Hyderabad (1808-1843 AD), gifted ten acres of wet land to the priests of the temples for offering 'naivedya' etc. to the Lord. The

Lord also has a few lands at Gollapalli, Teldarpalli and Kishtapuram villages, which are near Khammam."

There is a main entrance to the temple to the east, in the Brahman street of Khammam. The temple consists of sanctum, antarala, Ālvār sannidhi, Rājya Lakshmi Sannidhi and mukha maṇṭapa. There is a kalyāṇamaṇṭapa to the west of the temple. The sanctum is of two parts. The front room is antarala and the other is sanctum. The sanctum is 6' x 6' and so is the antarala.

The presiding deity is Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, which was consecrated. He holds Chakra in his upper right hand and Śhankha in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and the left is on the waist of Lakshmi, who is seated on the left lap of the Lord. The Lord is seated hanging his right leg down and the left is folded at the knee. The Lord wears a makutam, three casts marks on his fore-head and kora meesalu. He faces the east. The height of the Lord and his consort is 2' and 3/4' respectively. To the right of the Lord, Bhudēvi and to the left, Neeḷādēvi are installed. Every image has its own brass prabha on it. There is an image of Rājya Lakshmi to the right of 'antarala'. Before the presiding deity, the utsava idols of the Lord are there. They are Narasimha along with Lakshmi and Āṇḍāḷ.

To the left side of antarala, there is an Ālvār sannidhi, where Rāmānuja and ten idols of Ālvārs are installed. It is 4 1/2 x 6 feet. The area of the mukhamantapa is 18 x 16 1/2' feet. Vaikhāṇāsā Āgama is followed here. The Lord is worshipped twice a day. Abhiṣekam is performed on every pournami day, but 'abhisekam' is done to the 'sālagrāmas' everyday. There are the priests, who are Śrīvaishṇavas to worship the Lord.

Everyday in the morning about 8-00 A.M. the recitation of Vēdas is done by Yadavalli Rādhā Krishna Śharma and his

pupils under the auspices of T. T. D. Tirupati, The following festivals are observed in this Temple. They are ;

- a) Ugādi (April)
- b) Nṛsiṃha Jayanti (May)
- c) Śrī Kṛṣṇa Jayanti (August)
- d) Dasara (October) and
- e) Mukkōṭi Ekadaśi and Dhanurmāsam (December-January)

The temple is looked after by the temple committee with the income accrued from the lands. Every day in the evening from 4 to 6 P. M., nearly 15 devotees perform unbroken recitation of the names of the Lord. About 300 people pay their respects to the Lord on the day of Mukkōṭi Ekādaśi. During Dhanurmāsam on average about 25 people visit the temple every day.

2. Nagulavancha

Nāgulavancha is a Railway Station on Khammam - Vijayawāḍa lines of South Central Railway. The village is three kilometres from the railway station.

Panakala (Narasimha) Swamy Temple.

There is a temple, dedicated to Pānakāla Narasimha swāmī on a hillock about three kilometres from the village. The hillock is in between Nāgulavancha, Sheethampēṭa and Timmanēni pālem villages. There are no archaeological or historical evidences relating to the temple. Some information relating to the tradition, has been gathered from interviewing local persons and in particular from the priest of the temple.

The tradition relating to the temple is as follows.¹⁰⁸

About two hundred years ago, it was a big village with a hundred families of Vaiṣṇavas and Smārtas. It was then

known as Vanandulapatnam. One day, Lord Narasimha appeared in the dream of a Muslim and revealed that He manifested on a hillock, near sheetampet village. The sāheb approached the land-Lord, whose family was known as "Gaddamvāru" and revealed the whereabouts of the Lord. Then the land-lord constructed a temple." A Muslim made a gift of 200 acres of land for offering pānakam (Jaggery water) as Naivedya (food offering) to the god Narasimha".

On the lower part of the hillock, the god, it is believed, had manifested Himself on a small round rock under a cave. There is a kōnēru to the north, in front of the temple, The Kalyāṇa maṇṭapa is on the top of the hillock.

The sanctum is a cave, the roof of which is a big rock. There is a hole on the top of a small round rock in the sanctum, which is believed to be the mouth of Lord Narasimha. Above the mouth, there are three caste marks of Śrivaishnavas, which the devotees believe as the form of Narasimha, who is known here as Pānakāla Narasimha Swamy. Opposite to Him, there is a sculpture of Ranganayaka on the rock of the cave.

In the cave, to the south, opposite to the entrance, there is a black stone image of Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, with Lakshmi seated on his left lap. The Lord has four hands. He holds Chakra in his upper right hand and Śankha in his upper left hand. He holds the two legs of his consort, Lakshmi, together with his lower right hand and keeps his left hand round her waist. He has wide ears. He has the mouth of a boar. The Lord and his consort wear makutas, and anklets. He is 2' in height and his consort is about 3/4'. To the left of the image of Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy at some distance, there is a black stone image of Rāmānuja, in sitting posture with hands in 'anjali' mudra.

The utsava idols of Lord Narasimha Swamy are installed in the temple of kōḍaṇḍa Rāmaswamy, in the village,

Nāgulawancha. They are brought to the hillock during the annual festival of the Lord. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The priest is a Śrīvaṣṇava tradition in the worship of the ord. The Adhyayanōtsavam is celebrated for three days from phālguna śuddha Ekādaśi to Trayōdaśi (March-April), being paramapada utsavam on the last day.

The special feature of the Lord of this place is that He is offered Pānakam (Jaggery water) as "Naivēdya" (offering). The Lord is, therefore, called Pānakala Narasimha Swamy. One can observe such a phenomenon at Maṅgaḷagiri also, where the Lord is known as Pānakāla Narasimha Swāmy.

The annual festival of Lord Narasimha commences from phālguna śuddha chaturdasi to Bahuḷa panchami. (March-April). The day-wise programme of the festival is as follows.

1. Dhvajārōhaṇam-Chaturdaśi.
2. Kalyāṇōtsavam of the Lord-Pournima.
3. Sadasyam-Bahuḷa pratipada.
4. Garuḍa Vahanam-Vidiya
5. Chakravari-Tadiya.
6. Dōpu and Śrī Pushpayāgam-Chaviti.
7. Ekāntasēva-Panchami.

The utsava idols of the Lord are brought back to the village temple, Nagulawancha and Ekanta sēva in the night is performed in the temple.

The temple is run by the temple committee with the income from the lands attached to the temple. During the annual festival of the Lord, at the hillock, about 3000 to 4000 people, local and from the surrounding villages, congregate. The devotees generally offer "pānakam" (Jaggery water) to Lord Narasimha in fulfilment of their vows. The priest

pours "pānakam" into the mouth of the Lord, offered by the devotees. When it is poured into the mouth, half the quantity is ejected, whatever might be the quantity offered. This tradition is followed by the devotees irrespective of caste or creed.

There is a story current in the village.¹⁰⁹ "A Tahsilda. of the Taluk once visited the temple of Narasimha and put his finger inside the mouth of the image deliberately. At once the finger was bitten. The Tahasildar realising the Power of Lord Narasimha, passed orders assigning hundred acres of land as "Inam" to the temple for its perpetual maintenance.

In the month of 'Śrāvaṇa (August–September), the pilgrims of the surrounding villages particularly visit the temple.

3. Patarlapadu

Patarlapadu is situated at a distance of 26 KMS from Khammam, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The pūjāri is a śrīvaiṣṇava. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated on vaiśākha śuddha puṇṇima (May).

4. Mudigonda

Mudigonda is situated at a distance of 13 KMS from Khammam Railway station. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village.

The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for seven days from vaiśākha śuddha Ekādaśi to Bahuḷa vidiya (May). It is confined to this village only.

5. Yadavalli

Yadavalli is situated at a distance of 13 KMS from Khammam. There are two temples of Yōgānanda Lakshmi

Narasimha Swāmy, one in the village and the other on a hillock at a distance of 1 1/2 KMS from the village. The pujāri is a śrīvaishṇava of Vaikhānasa sect. The annual festival is celebrated at the temple of the Lord on the hillock for eleven days from Vaiśākha śuddha Ekādaśi to Bahuḷa śaṣṭi (May).

6. Lachagudem

Lachagudem is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Khammam. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The pujāri is a śrīvaishṇava. The annual festival is celebrated on vaiśākha śuddha purnīma (May). It is of local significance.

YELLANDU TALUK

1. Kambalapalle

Kambālapalle is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from Yellandu, the headquarters of the taluk.

Lord Narasimha Swamy in the form of an image on a stone slab is worshipped in the village.

2. Rompaid

Rompaid is situated at a distance of six kilometres from Yellandu. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. During the festival days, a pujāri is called for from Khammam. The annual festival is celebrated on vaiśākha śuddha purnīma (May). It is of local significance.

3. Pulluru

Pulluru is situated at a distance of 24 KMS from Yellandu. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The pujāri is a śrīvaishṇava. The annual festival of the Lord

is celebrated for three days from vaiśākha śuddha Trayōdaśi (May). It is of local significance.

BHADRACHALM TALUK

Kachavaram

Kāchavaram is situated at a distance of 35 KMS from Bhadrāchalam, the taluk head quarters. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The Kalyaṇō'savam of the Lord is celebrated on vaiśākha śuddha chaturdaśi (May). The devotees take bath in the river Gōdāvari and some devotees observe fasting and "Jāgaraṇam" also. The local people participate in the festival.

MADHIRA TALUK

Meenavolu

Meenavolu is situated at a distance of 11 KMS from Madhira, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha in the village,

MAHABUBNAGAR DISTRICT

MAHABUBNAGAR TALUK

1. Mahabubnagar Town

Mahabubnagar is the district head quarters of the same name. It is 85 KMS from Hyderābād.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

There is a temple of Narasimha, on a small hillock, in the town. It has only a sanctum. This temple was constructed in the year 1977 with contributions from the local people. The image of the Lord was consecrated on Nrisimha Jayanti of

Kālayukti (=1978). Narasimlu, Gopalam and others took keen interest to construct the temple for Lord Narasimha.¹¹⁰

The Lord is installed in a room, built recently. The image is of black stone. There are five hoods of "Śeṣha" on the head of the Lord. The Lord has open mouth and silver "Kōrameesalu", eyes and 'Nāmālu'. He has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and śankha in his left hand. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya hasta'. His left hand is around the waist of Lakshmi. Narasimha is seated on the coil of Shesha with the right leg hanging down and left folded at the knee. Lakshmi is seated on his left lap. She is hanging down her legs. Her right hand is not visible. She is holding a lotus, in her left, hand, which is hanging down. The image of the Lord is 3 1/2' in height and the height of Lakshmi is 1 1/2'. There is a brass "Makara Tōraṇa" on the image of the Lord. The temple faces the east,

Madhwa tradition is followed here. The priest is a Madhwa. Every day "abhishēkam" is performed and "naivēdyam" is offered. Sahasranāma Archana also takes place daily. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from vaiśākha śuddha Trayōdaśi to pournima (May), for three days only. The programme is given below :

Ankurārpana - Trayōdaśi

Kalyāṇam - Chaturdaśi

Rathōtsavam - Pournima

(Car-festival)

About 1000, people, local, congregate on the eve of the car-festival. The following festivals are celebrated at this temple.

1, Ugādi. Ārādhana and Pāñchāṅga Śravaṇam (April)

2. Śrī Rāma Navami, Bhajana. (April)
3. Nrushimha Jayanti, Beginning of the annual festival. (April)
4. Toli Ekādaśi (July)
5. Vijaya Daśami, Śaṁī Puja (October)
6. Dasara Navarātrulu, Panchāmrita abhishēkam and special naivēdyam (October)
7. Kārtika Ekadaśi, Bhajana and 'Pallaki sēva' (November)
8. Dhanur māsam. One month special worshp to the Lord in the early mōrning. (December-January),
9. Sankrānti. Tailābhishēkam to the Lord, Nearly 100 bullock-carts go round the hillock on this day (January)

There is a temple committee to look after the temple. The main source of income to the temple is the contribution of the devotees. Every day 20 to 30 local people visit the temple. On Saturdays the number exceeds 50. On Saturdays of 'Śrāvana' month, (August) about 100 people have the 'darśan' of the Lord.

2. Ippatur

Ippatūr is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from Mahabūbnagar town, the head quarters of the taluk and the district.

There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The name of the Lord is Yādagiri ; Narasimha Swamy, taken from the famous Yadagiri Narasimha Swāmy temple in Nalgōṇḍa district.

3. Koyila Konda

Kōyila Kōṇḍa village is situated at a distance of 21 kilometres from Mahabūbnagar town. There is a temple in the

fort on the hill. There is also a temple of Ugra Narasimha Śwāmy in the village. There is a ruined fort on the hill to the south of the village, at a distance of two furlongs. This is a place of some historical importance. "Kōilkoṇḍa was under the rule of Kōya doras. The fort on the hill was constructed by kōyadoras"¹¹¹ The stone wall relics around the fort on the hill can be seen now. During the 16th century, Sultan Quli Qutbul Mulk occupied it ¹¹² and strengthened the fort. As it was the strong hold of kōyas, surrounded by hills, the village was called Kōilkoṇḍa (Koil meaning Kōyas and the Koṇḍa meaning, hill in Telugu).

It is stated that when it was under the rule of Kōya Doras, who ruled this place with Pomp and splendour, the temple of Narasimha was in the fort on the hill.¹¹³ After the occupation of the fort by the Muslims, a temple was constructed in the village and the images were brought from the hill and installed in the village temple.

Old temple in the Hill - fort.

There is an old temple in the fort on the hill. It is under a big rock. The rock was cut into a depth of 4' leaving the upper side of it untouched, which forms the roof.

The rock, which has three caste marks on it, at present, is 6' x 6'. This is the form of the Lord, the people now believe. Infront of the rock, there are two pillars, 3' in height, which are built with stones and mortar. It is an open place. The rock faces the west. There are two water ponds (Kōnērulu) on the hill to the east and the north of this temple, There is a mosque to the east of the temple, which is known as "Bibika Maqbara Mosque." It is said that after breaking cocoanuts at the temple on the first and the last days of Moharrum, the Muslims celebrate their festival (Peerila paṇḍuga) on the hill.¹¹⁴

Account of the temple in the Village.

The sanctum is six square feet. In the sanctum, there is a raised plat form, on which the block stone images are installed. This platform is in the middle of the sanctum. The Lord and the entrance to the sanctum face the east.

Nṛisimha is seated on a pedestal with legs hanging down. Hiranya Kaśipu is stretched across his lap. The Lord has four hands. His upper right hand holds 'Chakra' and the 'Śankha' (conch) is in his left hand. The belly of the demon is being ripped open by the lower hands of the god. The Lord is 2 1/2' in height. The Lord wears 'hārās' and anklets. The Lord has open mouth. He has protruding eyes and wide face. He wears a makutā on his head. The head of Hiranya Kasipu is on the left lap of the Lord and his legs are on the right of the Lord. The image of the Lord is in black stone, with a brass prabha over it. The Lord wears "Narasimha Sālagrāma Māla" in his neck.

There is a separate block stone image of Lakshmi, which is to the left of Lord Narasimha. She holds a lotus in her right hand and her left hand is hanging down. She wears 'hārās' and anklets. She holds a lotus-bud in her right little finger. She wears a makuta on her head. This image is 2' in height. Lakshmi is in standing posture. To the right side of the presiding deity, there are three utsava idols. Lord is in the middle, having on either side his two consorts. There is a brass Prabha over the utsava idols, which are made of copper. In front of the presiding deity of the Lord, there is a brass idol of Tirumangai Āḷvār, riding on horse.

The mukhamantapā is 7 1/2 square feet in area. To the north of the mukha mantapa, there is a temple of Ānjanēya.

Every day 'abhishēkam' is performed to the Lord and 'naivēdyam' is offered at noon. The priest is a Madhwa.

Madhwa tradition is followed here. The Lord and his consort are decorated with the sandal paste instead of "Tirumanī" and "Tiru churna". The annual festival of the Lord will commence from Vaiśākha śuddha Trayōdaśi to Bahula Padyami. (May).

The programme is as follows :

- 1) Nrisimha Jayanti. At night Pallaki Sēva—"Trayōdaśi".
- 2) Prabha Utsavam. The Lord comes out of the temple on a vehicle and goes round the village with a procession of the devotees, which helps the aged and sick to take the darśan of the Lord-Chaturdaśi.
- 3) Morning - Kalyāṇam. Night - Rathōtsavam. (Car-festival) Pournima.
- 4) Amritā Snānam to the Lord-Bahula Pādyami.

On the day of Pournami, to witness the "car - festival" about 600 people, local and from the surrounding villages, congregate. The following festivals are being celebrated in this temple.

1. Ugādi - (April) At night 'bhajana' by the devotees
2. Nrisimha Jayanti At night, pallaki sēva in the premises
(April) of the temple.
3. Śrāvaṇamāsam Akhanda Deepārādhana during the
(August) night every day through out the month
and Bhajana at night.
4. Dasarā Navarātrulu (October)
5. Vijayadaśami Jambisēva in the evening
(October)

6. **Dhanurmasam** Special worship to the Lord for a month in the early morning (December January)

The temple has three acres of wet land, with which the priest maintains the temple. Every day 15 to 20 local people visit the temple. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) 20 to 30 people visit the Lord and they will do 'Bhajana' in the night. On the day of Vijaya Dashmi (October) nearly 300 people, local, visit the Lord. It is a popular temple among the neighbouring villages.

SHADNAGAR TALUK

1. Konudurg.

Kōnudurḡ is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from the Shādnagar Railway Station. There is an old temple of Narasimha Swamy at a distance of one kilometre to the north of the village.

There is a traditional story relating to the temple.¹¹⁵ The tradition is that 'Śrī Narasimha Swāmy went to the village headman, Mādhava Rao, on an Ekādaśi day in the guise of a Brāhmin and asked for food. When informed that the day was Ekadasi, a day of fasting, the Lord asked to be served at least some milk and said that. He would be sitting on a small hillock to the north of the village. When Mādhava Rao actually went to the hill with milk, he heard a voice from a rock saying that he was Narasimha Swāmy. A merchant passing that way slept at that spot and was told by the Lord in a dream to construct a temple for Him and a temple was constructed accordingly."

Nrisimha Jayanti is celebrated for three days from Vaiśakha śuddha chaturdaśi to Bahuḷa Pāḍyami (May). It is of local significance.

2. Kamsāni Pallē

Kamsāni Pallē is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from the Shādnagar Railway Station. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for three days in the month of Pashyam (January). About 1,000 Hindus, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate.

3. Byrukhan Palli

Byrukhan Palli is situated at a distance 19 KMS from the Shādnagar Railway Station. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village.

The pujari is a smārta brāhmin. Smārta tradition is being followed here. The annual festival is celebrated for six days from chaitra śuddha purnima to Bahuja panchami (April). About 300 devotees of the village, congregate.

4. Santhapur

Santhāpur is situated at a distance of 24 KMS from the Shādnagar Railway Station. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock near the village. The priest is a Brāhmin. Smārta tradition is followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for a day in the dark fortnight of śrāvaṇam (August). It is of local significance. The local Hindus participate in it.

KALVAKURTI TALUK

1. Tallakondapalli

Tāllakonḍapalli is situated at a distance of 29 KMS from Kalvakurti, the taluk head quarters. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock, which is 1 1/2

KMS from the village. The priest is a *kāmmari*. The annual festival is celebrated for ten days from Āśvīyujā Śuddha Pāñyami to Daśami (October). Free feeding is arranged during the festival. It is of local significance.

2. Bhairampalli

Bhairampalli is situated at a distance of 57 KMS from the Jadcherla Railway Station on the Secunderabad–Dronachalam section of the South Central Railway. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for four days in the month of vaiśākha (April). About 700 devotees of all castes of Hindus congregate.

ACHAMPET TALUK

1. Mamilla Palli

The village is situated at a distance of 4 1/2 kilometres from Rākoṇḍa, which is on the Achampēt–Nāgar Kurnool road. The temple is in the village.

There is an inscription engraved on the stone pillar lying in the Hanumān shrine, which is dated Ś-1100 (=1178 A.D.). It records the gifts of the village Māmiḷḷapalli and Mañchikunṭa to Nṛsiṃha by the brothers, Bhīma and Gōkarṇa, sons of Udayāditya and the grandsons of Gokarna I of the dynasty of Karikāla Chōḍa.¹¹⁶

On the other side of the same stone, the next portion records the gift of some lands to Nṛsiṃha by Khēyidēva daṇḍanāyaka, a servant of Harihara and officer of Kanduri Gōkarṇa Chōḍa dēva.¹¹⁷

There is a big simhadwāra, on which stands the five-storied gōpuram with different images gods on the four sides of it. It faces the east. Above the door, on a stone horizon-

tally laid, there is Gaja Lakshmi with elephants on either side, At the back of the elephant, there is a lion. On the five rows of the gopuram. The images of the incarnations of Vishnu and other gods were constructed. On the third story of the gopuram facing the east, the images of Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy and Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy were constructed. There are steps to reach the first-story of the gōpuram. There is an enclosure to the temple, connecting the simhadwāra. There is a fine "kōnēru" with steps before the entrance to the temple, and on the right side of the car-shed. There is a kalyāṇa maṇṭapa in front of the simhadwāra of the temple.

There is a temple of Hanumān, behind the Dhwajas-tambha, in the enclosure of the temple, facing the Lord.

The sanctum consists of two rooms, one is garbhagriha and the other "antarāla". Above the door of the 'antarāla', on a brass metal sheet, "Gaja Lakshmi" is carved, and on either side of the entrance on stone pillar, the figures of the entrance on stone pillars, the figures of Keertimakūṭa (head of the lion) are sculptured. To the right side of antarāla, after the pillar of Keertimakūṭa, there is a figure of "Śeṣha" with four hoods constructed on the wall, which faces the north. Garbhagriha and 'antarāla' are six square feet each, in area and the inside roofs are star-shaped with flowers at the centre.

The Lord is sculptured on a black stone. The Lord is in a sitting posture on a Pedestal. He has four hands. He disc and conch in his upper hands and his lower hands are in action opening the bosom of Hiranya Kāśi, laid on the lap of the Lord. The Lord is seated handing down his right leg, and keeping his left leg on the right. The head of the demon is on the left thigh of the Lord. The demon also wears

a makuṭam. The Lord has three caste marks (nāmās) on his forehead and he wears a makuṭam on his head. He is 2' in height. Around śilāprabha (Stone prabha), there is a brass prabha to the Lord. The Lord faces the north. In front of the presiding deity of the Lord, there are utsava idols, chakra perumandlu and the block stone image of Lakshmi, installed on a lower platform. Lakshmi is in padmāsana. She holds chakra and śhankha in her upper right and left hands respectively. Her lower right hand is in 'abhaya mudra' and there is a lotus in her left hand. She wears a makuṭam. She has red 'nama' on her forehead. She is 1 1/2' in height.

To the right side of the sanctum, there is an 'Āṇḍāl Sannidhi.' The image is of copper metal, 1 1/4' in height. To her left, there are stone and copper idols of uḍayavarulu, Nammālvār and Vēdānta Dēśikulu. The sannidhi is 3 x 4 1/2 feet. It faces the north. The mukha mantapa 18 x 16 1/2' consists of 18 stone pillars.

Pāncharātra Āgama is followed in the worship of the Lord. The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Every day worship is done and naivedya is offered to the Lord. On festive occasions 'abhiṣēkham' is performed, Adhyayanōtsavam is celebrated from Mukkōṭi Ekādaśi to Pournima. (December-January). The annual festival is celebrated from phālguna Śuddha Daśami to Bahuja Tadiya. (March). The programme is given here under.

1. Ankurārpaṣa - Daśami,
2. Dhvajārōhasam - Ekādaśi
3. Hamsa (Swān) Vāhanam - Dwādaśi.
4. Tiru Kalyānam and Garuḍa sēva - Trayōdaśi.

5. Gaja Vāhanam and small chariot - Chaturdaśi.
6. Rathōtsavam (car-festival) - Pournima.

The utsava idol of the Lord is known as Phrahlāda varada (Nrisimha) Swāmy. About 2000 people, local and from neighbouring villages, congregate on the eve of the car-festival.

The temple is run by the temple committee with a few lands attached to the temple. Every day nearly 10 people visit the temple. On Fridays and Saturdays, the number of visitors goes up to 20. On festival days nearly 100 people pay their respects to the Lord. A few marriages and 'Kēśa Khandana' ceremonies take place in the temple every year. It is a well-known temple in the surrounding villages.

KOLLAPUR TALUK

Singawatnam (Singōtam)

This village is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from Kollapur, the head quarters of the taluk. The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is to the east of the village at a distance of half a kilometre. To the south of the temple, there is a "kōnēru" and to the north of the temple, there is a tank known as 'Singamacharuvu'.

There is a local tradition, which is current among the local people.¹¹⁸ It says that Lord Narasimha appeared in the dream of Singam Nāyaka Bhupala of Jatprōle samsthānam and revealed His whereabouts to him. The Lord ordered him that he should be worshipped. Accordingly Singama Nāyaka found the image of the Lord in a dry field, which was converted into a tank later on after his name. He built a 'maṇṭapa' and consecrated the image of the Lord in it. The tank is still known as Singamacheruvu and the Lord is here known as

Siṅgamurti (Narasimha Swāmy). The village also derived its name from him. Siṅgama Nāyaka built this village, and so it was called Siṅgapaṭnam. But in course of time, it came to be known as Siṅgawaṭnan'.

Raja Chandulāl Bahadur, the Prime Minister of Nawab Sikinder Jā Bahadur Asafja, the third, of Hyderābād (Nizām) visited the temple and gave away an agraharam to Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.¹¹⁹ This temple consists of a sanctum, mantapa and mukhamantapa.

The sanctum is 3 x 1 1/2 feet. There is a small gōpuram on the roof of the sanctum. Above the 'gōpuram' is the roof of the mantapa, which is perhaps a later addition. In other words, the sanctum of the Lord is in the mantapa, which is 13 1/2 x 9 feet. The garbhagriha is a small one, which was constructed in the mantapa. The mantapa consists of four pillars. The roof of the sanctum is of polished stone. The temple faces the east.

The image of Lord Narasimha is round and is of black-stone. It is like a Śiva Liṅga. There is an outline of the Lord on the stone. His two hands are visible and they are in abhaya posture. The head and the mouth of the Lord are visible on it. The Lord has 'Kōrameesalu', mouth, eyes, and two abhaya hastas in silver. There is a line under the left hand of the Lord, which, it is stated, is that of Lakshmi. But it is not properly visible. There is a stone image of Hanumān to the left of the sanctum in the front side.

To the right side of the sanctum, there is a 'Lingam' in the same mantapam, in the south-west corner. Before the mantapa of the sanctum, there is a mukhamantapa with an area of 9 x 12 feet, consisting of 12 stone pillars.

The sannidhi of Embērumānāru is to the north of the temple, in the same premises. It is a black stone image, which is installed on a raised platform to the backside of the temple. The area of this sannidhi is 4 x 6 feet. The image is one foot in height. On it, there is a 'Makara Tōraṇa' of brass metal. In front of it, there is a copper image of Ācharya Embēru, which is 8" high. The priest for this sannidhi is a Śrīvaishṇava. Everyday worship is performed and naivēdyam is offered.

There is a Rāmānujakuṭam (kitchen), where the food-offerings to the Lord are prepared. It is to the west of the Sanctum of the Lord. There are a few choultries to the north of the mantapa of the temple. There is a choultry to the left of the 'Simhadwāra', which was built by Chāraiah in S ! 1819 (1897 A.D.) as it was written there.

The gōpuram on Simhadwaram was built in S' 1854 Śrī-mukha (A.D. 1933) by Sri Rāṇi Surabhi Vēnkaṭa Ratnamāmba of Jataprōla Samsthāna. She also constructed a temple on the hillock, which is to the east of the temple at the same distance and consecrated the image of Lakshmi in 1935.¹²⁰ This hill is known as "Ratna Lakshmi guṭṭa" after her name. The Lord is, therefore, known here as Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy. Everyday 'ārādhana and naivēāyam are offered to the image of Lakshmi by a brahmin of the village.

Every day abhiṣēkam is performed to the Lord and naivēdyam is offered. Akhandā deepam (perpetual lamp) is burnt in the sanctum. The priests are smārta Brāhmins. Smārta tradition of worship is followed here.

The annual festival of the Lord commences from the day of Sankrānti. The programme commences from Sankrānti, January 14 and comes to a close on 22nd January.

1. Ārādhana and Ankurārpaṇa - January 14

2. Śkaṭāḍṭsavam (procession of the bullock carts around the temple) – January 15.
3. Kalyaṇōtsavam of the Lord – January 16,
4. Rathōtsavam (Car-festival) – January 15,
5. Prabha Simha vāhanasēva – January 18.
6. Gaja and Garuḍa Vāhanas (Janatā sēvalu) – January 19
7. Dōpu (Pāruvēṭa) – January 20,
8. Teerthavalli - January 21.
9. Adhyayanōtsavam and pānupu sēva-January 22.

During the days of the annual festival of the Lord, free poor-feeding is arranged, The following festivals are celebrated in the temple.

1. Ugādi-Panchāṅga śravaṇam and sēva of the Lord (April).
2. Śri Rāma Navarātrulu - Bhajana by the devotees (April)
3. Nrisimha Jayanti-sēva of the Lord (May)
4. Toli Ekādaśi - sēva of the Lord (July)
5. Śrāvaṇa Māsam-Tulasi Archana to the Lord is performed throughout the month (August). Every Saturday of Śrāvaṇa. there is a sēva of the Lord.
6. Gōkulashtami-Uṭṭa programme and sēva of the Lord (August)
7. Vijaya Daśami - Jambī sēva of the Lord (October)
Nearly 500 – 600 local people visit the temple on this day.
8. Deepāvali - sēva of the Lord (November)
9. Dhanurmāsam – special worship to the Lord in the early morning for a month (December-January).

During the sēva, the Lord is taken out of the temple in a procession round the village, and at every house Hindu women offer 'Mangala Harati' to the Lord and it is considered to be a blessing to the married women.

The temple has 245 acres of dry land and 12 acres of wet land. For every three years, there is an auction. The highest bidder is given the lands of the temple for three years to cultivate. The income from the lands and the pilgrims is spent for the maintenance of the temple, for daily worship and for celebrating the annual and other festivals to the Lord. The priests are hereditary trustees of the temple.

A few marriages and 'kēshakhandanas' are celebrated every year in the temple. Every day nearly ten people visit the temple. On Saturdays the number of people goes up to twenty and more. For every two years, 70 to 80 business men from Kurnool and Rajasthan visit the temple in fulfilment of their vows to the Lord.¹²¹ About 2000 people, local and from other districts, congregate, on the day of the car-festival.

NAGAR KURNOOL TALUK

1. Vattam.

Vattam is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Nāgar-kurnool, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. There is a choultry also for the pilgrims.

2. Yendabetla

Yendabetla is situated at a distance of Two kilometres from Nāgar-Kurnool. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The priest is a vaishnava. The annual festival is celebrated for six days from

vaiśākha śuddha Dvāmi to pūrṇima (April). It is of local significance only.

3. Vallabhampalli.

Vallabhampalli is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Nāgar Kurnool. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for one day on Sankrānti (January). The festival is confined to the neighbouring village only.

4. Peddapalli

Peddapalli is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Nāgar Kurnool. There is a temple of Guṭṭṛa Narasimha in the village.

WANAPARTI TALUK

1. Wanaparti.

Wanaparti, the headquarters of the taluka of the same name, is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from Wanaparti road Railway Station on the Secunderābād D.ōṇāchalam Station of the South Central Railway and 125 KMS from Hyderabad. The place of worship in the town is the Gajjeladāsu Narasimha Swamy temple at Śankargunj street,

Wanaparti was under the Kanduru chiefs about 600 years ago and later on passed into the hands of Mannem Doras (tribal chiefs), who held it for fifty years. The ruler of Wanaparti enjoyed it paying a tribute to the Nizam of Hyderabad.¹²² The last ruler of this state was Rāja Rāmēshwar Rao. It was integrated in the erstwhile Hyderabad state after the police action on the Nizam territory. Rāmākrishṇā Rao I had transferred his capital from Siagur to Wanaparti.¹²³

There is a tradition which is popular among the local business people.¹²⁴ "Gajjeladāsu was a businessman. He was living at the village, Gōpālpēṭa. One day Lord Nara-simha Swamy appeared in his dream and ordained him to construct a temple at Wanaparti for Him. There upon Gajjeladās took the help of the rules of Wanaparti samsthana and others. He constructed the temple for the Lord in the first decade of the 20th Century. He did selfless service to the Lord till the end of his life foregoing all the pleasure of Life. He died and his tomb and be seen here now" The temple is known here as 'Gajjala Maṭham.' As Gajjēladasu constructed this temple, the Lord is known as Gajjeladās Narasimha Swamy.

The sanctum of the Lord is five square feet. There is a raised platform, attached to the back wall of the sanctum. On this, there is another platform. There is a stone which is one foot high 8" wide. On this stone, there is a black stone which is 3" in height. It is like a Śivalingam' on this black stone, two eyes and the three 'namās' are sculptured. The silver eyes and nāmās fixed with wax on them. A silver makuṭa is kept on the stone. The head is only visible after decorating the Lord with silver ornaments. The body, below the head is covered with clothes. Above the head of the Lord, the brass prabha is installed. This is the form of Narasimha in this temple, represented by a small round stone. The Lord faces the west.

In front of the Lord, on the lower step, there are three utsava idols of the Lord, To the right of the ut-ava idols, their is a copper image of Hanumān. There are two 'Narasimha Sālagrāmas' and a big conch before Lord Narasimha. There is a 'gōpuram' on the roof of the Sanctum with different image of gods.

In front of the sanctum, to the right, there is a temple of Hanuman in the same premises. There is mukhamāṇṭapa

before the sanctum. The area of the mantapa is 15 x 18 feet. There is a 'Simhadwāra' to the temple, which faces the road. Above the 'Simhadwāra', the image Gajalakshmi and two elephants raising their trunks upwards above her head are constructed on the wall. On the back of this figure, the figure of the head of a lion was constructed.

The priest is a smārta brahmin. Therefore Smarta tradition is being followed here. Everyday 'Ārādhana' and 'naivādyam' are performed and 'abhishēkam' is done on Saturdays only. There is no annual festival for the Lord here. The festivals of Ugādi and Vijayadaśami are celebrated in this temple.

On the day of 'Ugādi' (April), Panchānga śravaṇam is done. Dasara Navarātras (October) are celebrated for nine days in the temple. During these days nearly fifty people visit the Lord everyday.

As Gajjeladāsu belonged to the vaiśya community, the vaiśya community, in particular, shoulders the responsibility to run the temple constituting a temple committee. The liberal contribution of the business community is the only source of income to maintain the temple. Everyday nearly ten devotees visit the temple. On Saturday, 15 to 20 people visit the Lord. A few marriages are celebrated in this temple every year. After the local name of the Lord, some people name their children as Gajjeladās and Gajjalaiah. This is the impact of the Lord on his devotees here.¹²⁵

2. Katavaram

Katavaram is situated at a distance of 30 KMS from Wanaparti, the headquarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Lord Narasimha Swāmi in the cave on a hillock near the village. The priest is a lingayat. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for one day in the last week of Śravaṇam

(August). The villagers decorate their carts and take them round the hillock. About 200 local Hindus congregate.

ALAMPUR TALUK

Alampur

Ālampur, the head quarters of the taluk of the same name, is situated at a distance of 10 kilometres from Ālampur Road Railway Station on the Secunderabad. Drōṇāchalam Station of the South Central Railway. It is situated on the western bank of the Tungabhadra river. The river flows here from south to north, which is a rare occurrence and consequently Ālampur attained a special religious importance.

Several inscriptions and many temples, found in this village and its surroundings, bear an eloquent testimony to the antiquity and the historical importance of the place. The local museum has several interesting and thought-provoking sculptures. Ālampūr was known in historical times as Hatampura, Ālampura, Ānampura, Ālampuri. Ālampur and Ālampuri śīma¹²⁶ In the sthala purāṇa, Ālampur is called Hēmalā puri and it is connected to kāśi.¹²⁷ It is also referred to as Dakshina Kāśi and the western gate way of Śrīsaṅgam. It is also known as Bhāskara Kshētra, where there are separate temples for śaiva, vaiṣṇava, śāktēya, saura, gaṇāpatya and kaumāra Sects of Hinduism. Thus, Ālampur came into prominence on account of the existence of various temples dedicated to different gods. It is not only a place of religious importance, but also a place of tourist interest in Southern India.

There is a separate temple for yōgānanda Nrisimha Swāmy in the village. Besides, there are images of Jwāla Nrisimha Swāmy installed in the Brahmēśwara temple and the last one is in "Trimurti Ālayam" of the same temple. There

is a sculpture of Nrisimha killing Hiranya Kaśipu on the outer side of the southern wall of Vishwa Brahmēśwara temple. Nine incarnations of Viṣṇu, excluding kalki, are sculptured on the ceilings of the maṇṭapa of Suryanārāyaṇa temple and of Pāpa-nāśi group of temples. On the maṇṭapa of Brahma Nārāyaṇa temple also, on the bank of the river, to the south of the village, the nine incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are sculptured like a "Tōraṇa".

The temple of Yogananda Nrisimha Swamy

There are four inscriptions regarding this temple, two on two stone slabs, one on the image of Chākamma and the last one on a pillar in the maṇṭapa to the left of the temple. The last one is the earliest inscription of the temple. It records a gift of land by Chākamma, daughter of Talāri Brahmayā Nāyaka, to Mādhava Dēvara (pre-ent Narasimha Swāmy) in the pre-ent of Nāgadēva Nāyaka, a pratihāri of Mahāmaṇḍalēśwara Halla varasu (king of Puḍur), a vassal of Tribhuvana Malla. She renovated the old temple of Narasimha Swamy. It is dated S'1015 (1093 A.D.)¹²⁸ There is an inscription on a red stone slab, which is dated S'-1443 (1521 A.D.). The inscription refers it self to the reign of the Vijayanagara king, Vīra Krishṇadēvarāya. It registers the endowment of the village Bayārapura made to Yogānanda Narasimha of Ālampur by Gauradanāyaka at the instance of Gauradanayaka Basavapayya for the spiritual prosperity of the king and the religious merit of Gaurava Danayanka. After its endowment, the village was renamed Narasimhapura. It is stated that Ālampur sīma was granted as nāyankāra to Gauradanāyaka Basavayya after the king Krishṇadēvarāya had victoriously completed the norther 'digvijaya' and captured Rāichur.¹²⁹

The temple is in a stone prākāra. The simhadwāra is beautiful to look at and faces the west. There is a small tem-

ple of Āṇjanēya facing the Lord. He is carved on a stone. He is 6' high. There is a Kalyāṇa maṇṭapa to the north-east of the temple. Behind the sanctum, there is a peepal tree, under which a "shēsha" sculptured on a stone, is kept for worshiped. There is a mukhamaṇṭapa to the temple. Beside it, there is another maṇṭapa, which is now used as Kitchen (Rāmānuja kuṭam) preparing food for naivēdya of the Lord. After crossing three rooms (three antarālas), there is garbhagriha of the Lord. To the left of the sanctum, there is sannidhi of Chākamma. To the right of garbhagriha, there is a room, where "Asṭabhuja Mādhavi" is installed. In the first 'antarāla' after crossing the mukha maṇṭapa there are ten stone images of Āḷwārs and Raṅganāyaka lying on the serpent with his two consorts at his feet, all carved on a stone. They face west and east respectively. The first two 'antarālas' are 15 x 4 1/2 feet and the last one is 15 x 9 feet.

Garbhagriha is 4 1/2 square feet in area. The Lord is seated on a pedestal, carved on a black stone slab. He is 1 1/2' high. He has four hands, holding chakra and śankha in his upper hands. The lower hands are stretched forward and supported on the knees. He sits crossing his legs. There is yōga-paṭṭa going round the knees. The Lord has an open mouth and a tongue protruding and curled up. His ears are bulging. He has "udara bandha" on his stomach. The Lord keeps his feet on a flower. The deity wears a makuta, hārās, armlets, kaṅkanas and anklets. Under the left lap of the Lord, on śilā prabha, Lakṣmī is sculptured. She is 6" high and wears a makutam. She holds chakra and śankha in her upper hands. Her lower right hand is in 'abhaya hasta' and she holds a round thing in her lower left hand. She is seated on 'Padmāsana'. Under the right foot of the Lord, on śilā prabha, Prahlāda is sculptured with folded hands. He wears a makutam. He is

6" in height. On either side of the Lord, there are two women, each one side, holding vinjāmaras and standing in the service of the Lord.

There are ten incarnations of Vishnu, sculptured on the 'śilā prabha'. Over it, there is a brass prabha. The temple and mukha mantapa face the north.

There are 25 stone pillars in the mantapa, It is 24 x 18 feet. Beside this mantapa, to the left, there is an other mantapa. Madhwa tradition is followed in the worship of the Lord here. The priest is a Madhwa. The Lord is worshipped morning and evening at 7 O' clock.

The annual festival is celebrated on vaiśākha śuddha chaturdaśi, the day of Nrisimha jayanti (May). On that night, kalyānam is performed to the Lord. On pournima, the next day, there is Garuda Sēva of the Lord, when He is taken out of the temple in a procession. Toli Ekādaśi (July) and Dasara navarātras (October) are celebrated in a fitting manner.

About 600 people, local and from neighbouring villages, congregate on the eve of kalyanam on Nrisimha Jayanti. The temple is maintained by a temple committee. Every day nearly ten pilgrims visit the temple. A few people celebrate the marriages of their sons or daughters at this temple.

Images of Narasimha in other Temples of Alampur.

There are two black stone images of Harihara Jwālā Nrisimha and Ashtabhuja Narasimha, to the north-east, in the circumambulatory passage of Brahmēśwara temple. They are side by side.

Harihara Jwala Nrisimha Murti.

The Lord is standing. He is 1 1/2' high. His right leg is in 'Agni gundam'. He has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and Triśula in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in 'Janāna Mudra' and the left hand is in 'abhaya posture' holding 'Bilvadaḥa'. On the right side of the Lord is Surya and below him is Vighnēśwara. Mahishāśura Mardani is to his left and below her is Ambika. He wears makara kuṇḍala and Nāgakūṇḍala on his right and left ears respectively. Nrisimha has 'Phālanētra' on his forehead. He is in man-lion form. He has open mouth and eyes. He wears 'hārās.'

Shodasha Bhuja Ugra Narasimha Swamy.

To the left of Harihara Jwāla Nrisimha image, there is black stone image of Narasimha in ugra form with sixteen hands. He has open mouth and protruding eyes. He wears 'hārās.' Hiranyakaśipu is laid on the lord, keeping his head on the right thigh of the Lord. The demon also wears a makuṭa and 'hārās.' The god raises his uppermost right hand and holds an intestine of the demon, Hiranya Kaśipu. He has chakra, Khaḍga, Gada and Ankuśa in his second third, fourth, fifth and sixth hands. His seventh hand holds the makuṭa of the demon. His last hand is in action opening the bosom of the demon. Similarly, the Lord raises his upper most left hand holding an intestine of the demon and holds śhankha, Dhanus, Dālu, some thing round (Ghaṇṭa), and pāśha in his second, third, fourth and sixth hands. He holds the legs of the demon together with his seventh hand. His last hand is in action ripping open the bosom of the demon. The Lord is seated with the legs reaching the ground. The height of the sculpture is 3' and the bredth is 2 1/2'.

To the right, below the head of the demon there is

Prahlāda, with folded hands. To the left, below the legs of the demon, Hiranya kaśipu, there is Garuḍa kneeling.

These two images were brought from Pāpavināśini temples, as they became ruined. We donot know the exact location of the temples where the two images were installed. On the basis of image making, it is believed by G. Ramakrishna Sarma, that they belonged to 11th century AD.¹⁸⁰

Yogananda Nrisimha Swamy.

This is a black stone image, which was brought from out side and was installed in "Trimurti Sannidhi" to the north east of the first hall in the Brahmēśwaia temple. To his laft, Neeṇādhara Dakṣhina Murti and to his right, Brahma are there. That is why, this sannidhi is known as "Trimurti Sannidhi".

Here the Lord is Yogānada Nrisimha Swāmy. He has no makuṭa on his head. He has lion's face. The Lord is seated in Yōgāsana with Yōgapatṭa going round his knees. He crossed his legs. He kept his right leg on the left. He has four hands. He holds chakra and śankha in his upper right and left hands respectively. His lower right hand, supported on the knee, is holding a "Japamāla." His lower left hand is similar to the right hand with "Japagnāna Mudra" (counting fingers of the hand). The image is 2 1/2' in height.

Thus, Ālampur is very famous for its temples and their art and architecture. The collections of the local museum and rich sculpture of the temples and the mounments support the view that it was a flourishing centre of worship, attracting pilgrims from far and wide in the medieval period. In short, Ālampur is not only a place of religious importance to the different devotees, but also a place of tourist interest and a source of great delight to the students of art and history in Southern India.

MAKTAL TALUK

Maganur.

Maganur is situated at a distance of 9 KMS from Makthal, the quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the village. It is situated on the bank of a small rivulet with a formless stone. The pujāri is of Muṣṭi caste. The annual festival is celebrated for three days from Vaiśākha Śuddha Chaturdaśi to Vaiśākha Bahula Pādyami (April). The programme is as follows :

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| (1) Prabha festival | — | Chaturdaśi |
| (2) Rathōtsavam
(Car-festival) | — | Pourṇima |
| (3) Climbing of Pāluṭla Stam-
bham by the devotees | — | Bahula Pādyami. |

The special attraction of the festival is the climbing of pāluṭla stambham by the devotees, which is known as "utla stambham". Some devotees carry 'Jyōti' and 'gaṇḍā deepās'. About 4000, devotees from distant place, like Shōlapur, Bombay and the neighbouring villages, congregate,

MEDAK DISTRICT
SANGAREDDY TALUK

1. Sangareddy

Sangāreddy, the head quarters of Medak District, is situated at a distance of 59 KMS from Hyderabad. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the town, which is in a dilapidated condition. The town seems to be an ancient one. It is surrounded by a wall, which was built about 200 years ago by Sadāśivareḍḍi, who named it after his favourites son, Saṅgāreddy.¹³¹

The temple is in a ruined condition. After crossing the entrance to the temple, there is a small temple, where there are footprints of Lord Narasimha. This is known as 'Pādālagūḍa', which is three square feet in area. After crossing the third entrance, there is the Sanctum of Lord Narasimha, which is $4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ feet.

There is a raised platform attached to the back wall of the sanctum. There is a picture of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, in wooden frame with glass on it. In front of this picture, on a lower step of the platform, there is a small stone, on which the eyes and the mouth are only visible. The eyes are in awful form. This form is taken as the image of Lord Narasimha Swāmy by the local people. It is 6" in height. Above the platform, there are Chakra, 'Simha Lalatam' and śhankha constructed on the back wall of the sanctum.

On every saturday N. Basavarāju, K. Ramesh and other students worship the Lord. At night nearly 20 youth people perform "bhajana" there on every Saturday. There is no regular worship to the Lord here.

The festivals are celebrated at this temple with the donations from the local people. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated on the day of Ugādi, the Telugu New year day (April). About 600, local people congregate. Nrisimha Jayanti is also celebrated here and Vinayaka Navarātrulu are celebrated in this temple for nine days. The temple has some lands, but they are under dispute in the court of law. Some students and local people run the temple from the liberal contributions of the local people.

About 10 local people visit the temple daily. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), 30 local people visit the temple.

2. Rameshwar Banda

The village is situated at a distance of 26 KMS from Sangāreḍḍi, the head quarters of the taluk and the district. There is a temple of Ugra Narasimha Swamy in the village.

NARSAPUR TALUK

1. Ootla

The village is situated at a distance of eight Kilometres from Narasāpur, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. Pujari is a Golla.

2. Sherkhān Palle

Shērkhān Palle is situated at a distance of 9 KMS from Narasāpur. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The priest is a Muthāracha. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for three days from Vaiśākha Śuddha Ekādaśi to Trayōdaśi (May). The villagers patronise this festival. This festival is being celebrated for the past 30 years. About 300 Hindus, local and from the near by villages, participate in the festival.

3. Pedda Chinta Kunta

Pedda Chintn Kunta is six Kilometres from Narasāpur. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village.

4. Sikandlapur

Sikandlāpur is situated at a distance of 3 KMS from the Manōharābād Railway Station on Kacheeguḍa-Manmād section of South Central Railway.

There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the

hillock, which is near the village. Pujāri is a Śrivaishṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated in the month of Dhanurmāsam (December-January). About 5000 devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate, irrespective of caste or creed. There are three choultries for the pilgrims here.

RAMAYAMPET TALUK

Ramayampet

Ramayampet is situated at a distance of 22 KMS from Medak on the Hyderābād-Kāmareḍḍi bus route. The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock is to the west of the village at a distance of one kilometre. There is no archaeological or historical evidence relating to the temple. Information has been gathered from interviewing the local people and the priest of the temple.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the hillock

The temple of the Lord on the hill is in a cave, which is formed by two big boulders. The roof of the cave is formed by small boulders and stones. The black stone image, 1 1/2' in height, is installed at the back wall of the cave. The image of the Lord and stone "Prabna" around it, are sculptured on a single slab stone. The Lord has four hands. He holds conch in his upper right hand and the disc is in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in "abhaya" posture. His lower left hand is on the club. The Lord is Standing on a Pedestal. The length of the cave from the east to the west is 9 feet and breadth 4 1/2 feet.

The Priest is a Śrivaishṇava, who worships the Lord on the hill once in a year on pushyā Bahuḷa Amāvāsya (January), the day on which annual festival of the Lord is celebrated.

This festival is confined to this village and its neighbouring villages. Hindu devotees, nearly two thousand, participate in the celebration of this festival and they visit the Lord on that day only. A fair is held on that occasion also.

MEDAK TALUK

1. Kondapur

Kondapur is situated of 19 KMS from Chēgunṭa, which is on the Hyderābād-Kāmāreddi road. There is a Lakshmi Narasimha Swamī temple on the hillock near the village. The hillock is known as "Siṅgarāyamugutta". The Pujāri is a Vaishnava. Panchrātra Agama is being followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for three days from Māgha Bahuḷa Tadiya to Panchami (February). It is of local significance. The villagers are the patrons.

2. Hastālpur.

Hastālpur is situated at a distance of twenty six kilometres from Medak, the head quarters of taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The annual festival takes place for a day in the month of Śrāvaṇa (August). About 500 local people congregate irrespective of caste or creed.

GAJWEL TALUK

1. Dilālpur

Dilālpur is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Gajwel, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The image is in the form of man-lion.

There is a local tradition relating the installation of Lord Narasimha.¹⁸² "To the west of the village was found a

huge stone with broken lines in the middle. From the broken lines, comes the scented odor of incense sticks. Some people found coins belonging to the reign of Nizam in the crevices. When the villagers had gone to observe the stone, the stone spalled off revealing the image of Narasimha Swamy. The villagers constructed a temple and installed the Lord on Chaitra Śuddha Navami, Śārvari" (15th April 1960 A. D.),

The Pujāri is a śātāni Vaishṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival is celebrated for two days from chaitra śuddha Navami to Daśami (April). About 2,000 devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages, participate.

2. Angadi Kistapur.

Angadi Kistapur is situated at a distance of one kilometre from the Gajwel – Jagadevpur road. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The temple committee runs the temple.

3. Vellur.

Vellur is 19 KMS from Gajwel, the head quarters of the taluk. There is temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the village. The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The annual festival is celebrated for five days in the month of Vaiśāka (May). About 200 people, local and from neighbouring villages, congregate.

4. Kucharam.

Kucharam is situated at a distance of 29 KMS from Gajwel. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for three days in the month of Phālgunam (March). About 12,000 people, local and from other taluks of Medak district, congregate.

5. Nacharam

Nacharam is situated at a distance of 12 KMS. from Tooprān on the Hyderabad - Kamareddi road.

Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple of Narasimha Swamy, known as Nāchāram Narasimha Śwāmy temple, is on the hillock, which is two kilometres from the village. There is no archaeological evidence relating to the temple. There is a local tradition, which is recorded in the almanac of Siddhārthi of Telugu year by Appam Kāṇḍāḍai Śrīnivāsāchārya. Besides, some information has been gathered from the interviews with local people and the priest in particulars.

The local tradition as recorded by Śrīnivāsāchārya, says¹³³ "that Nāchagiri is one of the holy places in South India. The Navanātha Siddhas (nine great ascetics) started on pilgrimage to visit the holy places in south India. They halted at Śvētagiri, which is on the bank of the rivulet, Haridra for the night. In their dream, Narasimha Swamy appeared in nine forms before them. Then they woke up immediately and praised Him profusely. Mutering the name of God, they began penance on the hills, near the rivulet Haridra. Pleased with deep devotion, Lord Narasimha gave 'darśan' to the eight ascetics. The Lord along with his consort, Lakshmi made his form known to the ninth Siddha (sage). The Lord is, since then, in the cave to fulfil the vows of his devotees. This place is known as Svētagiri or Nāchagiri."

The main temple dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha is on the hillock. The other temples are :

- a) Śrī Rāma temple
- b) Śiva Temple

- c) Navagraha temple
- d) Hanumān temple
- e) Tāyāru (Lakshmi) temple and
- f) Āṇḍal temple with 12 Ālvārs and two Āchāryās of
Rāmānuja and Manavāḷa Māhāmuni.

There is a kōṇēru on the hillock. There is a Hanumān temple near the Sabhā maṇṭapam (the meeting place) of the Lord. The Simhadwāra was constructed by a devotee, named, Sāmala Peṇṭaiah of Secunderābād on 20th March, 1939, as it was written there. There are various images of gods on it. Kalyana mantapa is to the east of the temple. There are some choultries also for the pilgrims.

MAIN TEMPLE OF LAKSHMI NARASIMHA SWAMY

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy consists of a sanctum and mukhamantapa. The sanctum is a cave. The Tāyāru (Lakshmi) temple is to the right side of the sanctum. The Āṇḍal temple is to the left of the sanctum. Before the sanctum, there is a spacious mukha mantapa, which was recently constructed. It was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister, Jalagam Veṅgaḷ Rao on 2nd February 1977.

It is believed that Lord Narasimha revealed Him self on a rock, which is the back side of the cave. He holds Chakra and dṣankha in his upper right and left hands respectively. If we carefully observe the sculpture, we can see the other two hands also. He is in sitting posture. The face of the god is fierce-looking with rolling eyes and the tongue stretched out and curled up. He has bulging ears. The demon-king Hiranya Kaśipu is not visible on the lap of the Lord. But it is believed that the Lord is ripping open the bosom of the demon-king. It is only an attribute to the ugra rupa of Lord Narasimha. The

Lord is decorated with a silver plate on the chest. A silver prabha is erected over it. The height of the sculpture is 1 1/2' in height. There is a black stone image of Lakshmi to the left of the Lord. It is decorated with silver cover and has silver prabha on it. The image of Lakshmi was installed in recent past.¹³⁴

There are utsava idols of the Lord with Ādi Lakshmi and Chenchu Lakshmi on either side of the utsava vigraha of the Lord. The other idols in the sanctum are of Āndāha, Rām ānuja, Nammālvār, Manavāḷa, Śrī chakra Swāmy, Lakshmi and Śrī Krishṇa.

Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here. The priests are Śrīvaiṣṇavas. The head Priest, Parāmkusham Rāmānujā Chārya, is a trained pujari in Kapinjala type of worship at the temple of Yādagiriguṭṭa of Nalgoṇḍa district. There is a Vedic Pandit (Ghanāpāṭi), who recites the vedic hymns during 'Abhi-shēkam' of the Lord. The daily programme of the temple is as follows.

1. Opening the door of the temple and Ārādhana - 6.00 A. M.
2. Bala Bhōgam - 8.00 Ā.M.
3. Abhishēkam to the Lord and his consort-9 00 A.M. to 10.30 A.M.
4. Kumkumārchana and Sahasranāmārchana by the devotees - 10.30 A.M. to 11.30 A.M.
5. Ārādhana and Naivēdyam-11.30 A.M. to 12.00 Noon.
6. The doors remain closed - 12.00 Noon.
7. Opening the door of the temple - 4.00 P.M.
8. Archanas by the devotees as in the morning - 5.00 P.M. to 6.30 P.M.
9. The Lord on vahanas (Sevas) with a procession of the devotees - 6.30 P.M. to 7.30 P.M.

10. Āradhana and Naivēdyam - 7:30 P.M. to 8.30 P.M.
11. Śayanōtsavam of the Lord - 8.30 P.M. This utsava is performed with the idol of Krishna in the Sanctum.
12. The temple doors closed - 9.00 P.M.
The following festivals are performed at this temple.
 1. Ugādi, Telugu New Yearday (April).
 2. Tiru nakshatram of uḍayavar Embēr Mānār-Vaiśākha Śuddha Chaviti (May).
 3. Śankara Jayanti, vaiśāka Śuddha Panchami (May)-
 4. Nrisimha Jayanti-Śata Ghaṭābhishēkam. Vaiśāka Śuddha Trayōdaśi (May).
 5. Tiru Nakshatram of Nammālvār, vaiśākha Purnima (May).
 6. Tiru Nakshatram of Āṇḍāl Śrāveṇa Śuddha Tadiya (August).
 7. Tiru Nakshttram of Manavāla Mahā muni, Kārtika Śuddha panchami (November)
 8. Dhanurmāsam (December-January)
 9. Mukkōṭi Ekādaśi-Pushya Śuddha Ekādaśi (January)
 10. Gōdā kalyāṇam, End of Dhanurmāsam—Pushya Bahuja Pādyami (January).

Adhyayanōtsavam is celebrated for five days from pushya śuddha Ekādaśi to purnima (January). Recitation of Drāviḍa Prabandhas is done in the morning and evening. The programme is as follows.

1. Adhyayanōtsavam-Toḷakkam-Ekādaśi
2. Adhyayanōtsavam-Toḷakkam - Dwādaśi
3. Adhyayanōtsavam-Toḷakkam-Trayōdaśi
4. Adhyayanōtsavam-Toḷakkam-Chaturdaśi and
5. Adhyayanōtsavam-Toḷakkam - Parampada utsavam-Fourpima.

The annual festival is celebrated from phālguna Bahula panchami to Amāvāsyā for eleven days (April). The programme is given below.

1. Ankurārpana - Panchami
2. Dhvajārōhaṇam and Bhērīpuja - Shasti
3. Tiru kalyāṇam of the Lord - Saptami
4. Hamsa vāhanōtsavam (The Lord sits on the vehicle of swan)-Ashtami
5. Gajavāhanam (vehicle of elephant) - Navami
6. Śēsha vāhanam (Vehicle of seven hooded serpent)-Daśami.
7. Garuḍōtsavam (Kite vehicle)-Ekādaśi
8. Hanumanta Sēva (Hanuman vehicle)-Dvādaśi
9. Ponna vāhanōtsavam-Trayōdaśi
10. Car-festival (Rathōtsavam) at night-chaturdaśi
11. Chakra Teertham and Dōpōtsavam-Amāvāsyā.

On car-festival day, about 10,000 devotees, local and from other districts of the state also, congregate. This festival is being celebrated for the past 120 years.¹³⁸

There is a temple committee. The income from the devotees is the only source of income to the temple. It is a 'B' class temple under the Department of Endowments, Government of Āndhra Pradesh. The income from the devotees is more than Rs. 20,000 per year. Every day nearly 100 people, from local and surrounding areas and from other districts of the state, particularly from Hyderābād and Nizāmābād, visit the temple. On Saturdays, about 200 people visit the Lord. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) on Saturdays, about 300 people visit the temple and on other days nearly 250 visit the Lord.

The doveees, most of them are villagers, take a dip in the "kōnēru" and then pay their respects to the Lord. When some devotees were interviewed,¹⁸⁶ it is gathered from them, that incurable diseases were cured and ghosts were driven out of them. The devotees suffering from a disease take a dip in the "kōnēru" and go drenched to the temple to pray to the Lord to fulfil their desires. They stay there for some time.

There is a tradition that grief stricken people hang, a cocoanut, after performing 'puja', from the roof of iron bars in the mantapa of Śrī Rama temple. When their grief is turned into happiness, again, they visit the temple and break that cocoanut and fulfil their vows to the Lord in cash.

SIDDIPET TALUK

1. Ghanpur

Ghanpur is situated at a distance of 64 KMS from the Akanapēt Railway Station on the Section of Kāchigūḷa-Manmāḍ Railway line. There is a temple of Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for two days from Māgha Śuddha Purnima to Bahuḷa Pād̐yami (February). About 1500 local people participate in the festival.

2. Gurrālagondi.

Gurrālagondi is situated at a distance of 11 KMS from Siddipēt, the head quarters of the taluk. The black stone image of Narasimha Swāmy, in human form, is in the temple on a hillock, which is at a distance of two kilometres from the village. It is in between Jakkāpur and Gurrālagondi

villages. There is no historical or literary evidence relating to the temple. Some information has been gathered from interviewing the local people and the priest. It is an ancient temple, which is 200 years old.¹⁸⁷

The temple of Narasimha Swamy on the hill

There is a big rock which stretches sloping from the east to the west, at the end of which the face, and the mouth of the Lord, are sculptured. The garbhagriha or the temple is built on this rock with stones. There is a rock in the garbhagriha which forms the back of it. There is a stone platform attached to the back wall of the garbhagriha, on which a one-foot high black stone image of Narasimha Swamy is installed. The Lord is in human form with two hands folded together. He is in the posture of 'Ācharya peetham'. It seems that this image belongs to an Ālvar. The Lord has silver moustache. To the left side of the image of the Lord, the image of Lakshmi is installed. The Lord and his consort are in the centre. On either side of them, Nammālvar and uḷayavarulu, are seated with folded hands together. The area of the garbhagriha is six square feet.

Before the garbhagriha, there is a mukha maṇḍapa with four pillars without roof. To the north-west of the temple, there is a 'kōnēru' at a distance of two hundred yards from the temple. Every day 'abhisēkham' is performed to the Lord on the rock and to the block stone images of Narasimha Swāmy and Lakshmi. There are two priests, who are sātani śrīvaishnavas. They worship the Lord in turn. They follow the Tamil Prabandhas, in the worship of the Lord,

Adhyayana utsavam is celebrated on chaitra śuddha Ekādaśī (April). The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from chaitra śuddha Ekādaśī to Purnima, (April), for

five days. The villagers are the chief partons to celebrate this festival. This is confined to this and near by villages. About 2,000 villagers congregate. A fair is held for two days in this connection. The devotees offer silver moustache to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows.

3. Pulluru.

Pulluru is situated at a distance of 11 KMS from Siddipēt. Lord Narasimha temple is on the hillock, which is one kilometre from Pulluru and two kilometres from Malyāl. The hillock is in between the two villages. The temple was constructed on the spacious rock, which is one furlong in length. There is no historical evidence relating to the temple. Information is gathered from the interviews with the local people and the priest in particular. The predecessors of the priest's family have worshipped Lord Narasimha Swāmy for the past two hundred years.¹³⁸

There are two entrances to the temple of Narasimha, one from the east, which is main entrance and the other from the west.

There are some temples on the hillock, which are in a ruined condition.

Above the door, on the horizontal pillar, Gaja Lakshmi and two elephants raising their trunks on the head of Lakshmi on either side, are sculptured. After crossing the door, there is a mukha mantapa of the Lord with sixteen pillars. The area of this mantapa is 18 x 16 1/2 feet. There is a door to this mantapa from the north. The sanctum is divided into three parts. The first room is antarāla, in which the Gandā deepam is burnt. The door to the antarāla faces the north. From the back wall of the antarāla, to the right, there is an entrance to the garbhagriha.

There is a rock which is round and slanting from the top to the bottom with a surface on the top. The rock is 2' in height with a radius of one foot. On this rock, a mouth and two feet are sculptured. These are considered to be the mouth and the feet of Lord Nirasimha Swāmy. Further, the people believe that Lord Nirasimha Swamy manifested here with these symbols. The sculpture on the rock faces the west.

The area of the garbhagriha is nine square feet. On a small platform of the sculpture of the Lord on the rock, there is a black stone image of Lakshmi Nirasimha Swamy, with Lakshmi seated on his left lap. It faces the north. The Lord keeps his right leg on the peetham. The Lord holds Chakra and Śankha in his upper hands. His lower right hand is in "abhaya hasta" and the left is on the waist of his consort, Lakshmi. The image is 1 1/2' in height.

There is a black stone image of Āṇḍāl, 2' in height, which faces the north. There are six Ālvārs to the right of the sculpture on the rock of the Lord, each one foot in height. They face the south. They are Nammālvār, Kulaśēkhara, Periālvār, Tonḷaradippodī Ālvār, Tiruppān Ālvār and Tirumangai Ālvār.

Daily "abhishēkam" is performed to the Lord, sculptured on the rock. Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. There are two priests, who are śrīvaiṣṇavas. They have some "inām" lands gifted for the worship of the Lord. The Adhyayana utsavam and the annual festival are celebrated on Pushya Bahuḷa Amāvāsya (January). About 3,000 people, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate on the eve of the festival. The utsava idols of the Lord are installed in the house of the priest at the village.

During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), the local and neighbouring villagers, along with their families, visit the

temple. Particularly on Saturdays of Śrāvaṇa (August), the number of visitors to the temple is more than fifty and on other days more than thirty.

NALGONDA DISTRICT

NALGONDA TALUK

1. Kompalle.

Kompalle is situated at a distance of 32 KMS from Nalgonda, the headquarters of the taluk and the district. There is a temple of Lord Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for two days from Māgha Bahuja Amāvāsya to phālguna śuddha pāṇyami (March). About 200 local Hindus congregate.

2. Shapalle

Shāpalle is situated at a distance of 26 KMS from Nalgonda. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for 10 days in the month of Pushyam (January). About 1500 local people congregate.

3. Melladuppalle.

Melladuppalle is situated at a distance of 8 kms from Nalgonda. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated in the month of chaitram (April). Local Hindus congregate.

SURYAPET TALUK

1. Nandapoor

Nandāpūr is situated at a distance of 45 Kms from Jangāon. There is a temple of Narasimha in the village, which

is in a dilapidated condition without any worship. A strange account for this neglected condition of the temple is given below.¹⁸⁹

"The Narasimha Swamy temple to the north of the village is said to have been constructed about five centuries back by two dēvadāsi sisters. Pujas and festivals were performed for some time with much pomp. As the two sisters, however, estimated, one day, the money spent towards the expenditure on construction of the temple while they were answering calls of nature. Lord Narsimha was said to have been angered at the unceremonious way, in which the sisters discussed the cost of the construction and after delivering a blow to the stone pillar of sabhā maṇṭapa (court) with His sword. He left the place and merged Himself in the Archāpalle temple. The scarred blood marks on the pillar are claimed as proof that stones too had life in those days. The sabhā maṇṭapa is a beautiful hall with thirty six pillars.

2. Gotti Parti

Gōṭṭi Parti is situated at a distance of about 40 Kms from Sūryāpēt, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock, to the north of the village. The priest is a Śrī vaiśṇava. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for two days on Vaiśākha śuddha caturdaśi and Purnīma (May). The Local Hindus, irrespective of caste or creed, congregate.

3. Kukkudam

Kukkudam is situated at a distance of 19 Kms from Phani-giri on the Sūryāpēt-Jangām bus route. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock, to the north of the village. The priest is a Śrīvaiśṇava. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for two days on Vaiśākha Śuddha Cha-

turdaśi and Purnima (May). The local Hindus, irrespective of caste or creed, congregate.

4. Tungaturti

Tungaturti is situated at a distance of 42 Kms. from Suryāpēt. There is a temple of Nārasimha Swāmy in the village. On Ugādi day (Telugu New Year day), special worship is performed to the Lord.

5. Arvapalli

Arvapalli is situated at a distance of about 24 Kms from Suryāpēt by road. It was an ancient place which was famous in those days. Śrī Krishnadēva Rāya in his invasion on Telangana came to "Aruvapalli" and captured it.¹⁴⁰

There is a tradition Which is on record.¹⁴¹ Although it is written in recent past, it gives the history of the temple. The tradition goes like this.

"Long ago Lord Nārasimha manifested Himself on a hill near this village. An old Brāhmin was worshipping the Lord. Owing to old age he was unable to climb the hill. He expressed his helplessness to the Lord. The Lord appeared in his dream and revealed that he came down from the hill and settled on a small hill. The old Brahmin along with the villagers searched for the Lord. Atleast they found the Lord on a small hill in the Yōga posture. There was also a "kōnēru" on the hill, Years passed away. The Lord was displeased with the unbearable noise coming from the village. One day a shepherd grazing his sheep sat under the shade of a tree. He heard the Lord saying from behind that he was reluctant to stay there. When the shepherd turned back, there was nobody. He got frightened and ran away. The Lord appeared in the guise of an old Brahmin to him and asked him to show a peaceful place.

for him. Accordingly the shepherd showed him the present place of the temple. Then the Old Brahmin turned into Ādiśeṣha. It was dusk. Night fell. The shepherd went away to his house. That night the Lord appeared in the dream of Annaparāya, a resident of Jājireddi palle and asked him to construct a temple for him. Annaparāya and the villagers searched for the abode of the Lord and they constructed a temple there. They arranged food offerings to the Lord every day. But there were no festivals celebrated for the Lord. Therefore they brought utsava idols of Lakshmi Nṛasimha from Kāṇḍagiri and began to celebrate the festivals in accordance with Vaiṣṇava Āgama principles. From that time onwards, the Lord is known as yōgānanda Lakshmi Nṛasimha Swāmy”.

Simhadwara was built by Mallāreddi. In 1941, the Deputy Collector, by name Syed Ali, made arrangements for building the ‘prākāra, to the temple and daily rituals to the Lord. The department of Endowments of the Government of Andhra Pradesh took it under its control during 1962-63 and arranged daily worship and naivedya to the Lord.

Even today we can see the temple of Lord Nṛasimha on a hill, which is one kilometre from the village. But the temple is in a dilapidated condition. By the side of the temple, there is a “kōṇēru” also. Now there is neither an image of the Lord nor the daily worship.

The presiding deity of Yōgānanda Nṛasimha Swāmy is installed in the temple of Arvapalli and the utsava idols of Lakshmi Nṛasimha Swāmy are adorned in the temple of Jājireddi gudem, which is three kilometres from Arvapalli. The annual festival takes place at Arvapalli and the other festivals at Jājireddigudem. The priests of Nṛasimha at Arvapalli are the priests of the Lord at Jājireddigudem. There is no presiding deity of Nṛasimha at Jājireddigudem

The sanctum is 7 1/2 square feet. The Lord is carved on a black stone. He is 1 1/2' in height. There is a brass Makara Tōraṇa over the stone image of the Lord. The Lord has chakra in his upper right hand and conch in his left hand. He kept his lower hands on his knees. He sat cross legged. The Lord wears a makuta and Kōrameesalu. He has three "nāmās" on his fore head. The Lord faces the east. Infront of the presiding deity, there are three copper utsava idols of Narasimha, with Chenchu Lakshmi and Ādi Lakshmi on either side.

To the right side of Antarala, the image of Āṇḍāl is installed. It faces the east. To the left side of antarala, there are twelve black stone images of Āḷwārs, who face the south. The mukha mantapa consists of sixteen stone pillars. The simhadwāra is to the east. Next to that is a Kalyāna mantapa with four pillars.

Vaikhānasa Āgama is followed here. Abhiṣēkam is performed to the Lord every day and cooked rice with curd is offered as "naivēdya" daily. There are five priests, who are Vaishṇavas. They worship the Lord in turn at Arvapalli and Jājireḍḍigudem.

Adhyayana utsavam is celebrated for three days, from Māgha Śuddha Ekadaśi to Trayodaśi (February).

1. Toḷakkam – Ekādaśi.
2. Recitation of Tamiḷ Divya prabandha – Dwādaśi.
3. Paramapada utsavam – Trayōdaśi.

The utsava idols are brought from Jājireḍḍigudem to this temple on the day of Sankrānti and they are taken back to Jājireḍḍigudem on Māgha Babuḷa Trayodaśi (February). The Lord comes out on a vehicle on every Friday and goes round the temple.

The annual festival is celebrated for a fortnight. During these days the Lord is taken round in a procession on the vehicles of Ratham, Ponna sēva, Garuḍa sēva, Hanumān, Śēsha, Hamsa, Elephant, Dēvarāja, Palanquin and Aśva. Every day the Lord, during this festival, rides on a vehicle. A fair is held during this period. About 1,000 devotees from local and from neighbouring villages, congregate at this festival.

The festivals, other than the annual festival of the Lord, that are celebrated in the temple of Jajireddigudem, are :

1. Ugādi. Panchānga Śravaṇa and Sēva (April).
2. Śrī Rāma Navami (April).
3. Nrisimha Jayanti (May).
4. Toli Ekādaśi (July).
5. Āṇḍāl Tirunakshatram (August).
6. Śrī Krishna Jayanti, Uṭṭa and sēva (August)
7. Vijaya Daśami, Sēva (October).
8. Deepāvali, Sēva (November).
9. Kārtika pournami. Decoration of the temple with lamps (November).
10. Dhanurmāsam. One month special worship to the Lord (December – January).
11. Mukkōṭi Ekādaśi. Sēva of the Lord (December – January).

Generally pilgrims visit the temple of Narasimha at Arvapalli. Some people visit the temple with a view to celebrating hair-cutting and marriage ceremonies of their sons and daughters in the presence of the Lord. Some people offer bullocks in fulfilment of their vows to the Lord. Every day nearly ten people visit the temple and on Saturdays of Śravaṇa, the number goes upto 40 to 50. On Tuesday, because of the

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fact, about hundred people visit the temple, It is a belief prevalent among the people that incurable diseases will be cured here and evil spirits, which haunt the people, are driven out by the grace of the Lord, if they stay here for some time worshipping the god, as is known from the interviews with some persons there.¹⁴² Thus, this place is famous in the neighbouring villages.

6. Kandaghatla.

Kandaghatla is situated at a distance of 5 Kms from Jangaon - Suryapet bus route and 14 Kms from Suryāpet. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The priest is a vaishṇava. Brahmōtsavam is celebrated from vaiśākha Śuddha purnīma to Bahuja Saptami (May). It is of local significance.

7. Urlugonda.

Urlugonda is situated at a distance of 26 Kms from Suryāpet. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on a hillock to the south of the village. The image of the Lord is in the form of man-lion. The pujāri is a Brahmin. The kalyāṇōtsavam of the Lord is celebrated for six days from Phālguna Śuddha purnīma to chaitra Śuddha panchami (April). About 1,000 Hindus, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate. There is a temple committee, which runs the temple through the income of the lands attached to the temple.

8. Sirikonda

Sirikonda is situated at a distance of about 3 Kms. from the road of Suryapet-Khammam bus route. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for three days from Vaishakha Śuddha Purnīma to Bahula Vidiya (May). About 500 local Hindus congregate.

HUZURNAGAR TALUK

Mattapalli

Mattapalli is situated at a distance of 28 Kms from Huzurnagar. The temple of Yôgānanda Narasimha Swāmy is two furlongs from the village. This holy place is on the bank of the river Krishna in a thick but lovely forest. The modern Telugu works of Mattapalli Mahatmyam and a book-let by His Holiness Śrī Kēśava Tīrtha Swāmy, President, Renovation Committee, Mattapalli Śrī Lakshmi Nrisimha Kshētra, Mattapalli, interviews with the priest, chairman of the temple committee and other devotees, give some information regarding this temple. An article in Arādhana, a monthly magazine of the Endowments Department of Andhra Pradesh also provides some information.¹⁴³

Mattapalli Narasimha Swāmy is one of the Pancha Narasimhas on the banks of Krishna. The five famous pilgrim centres are Vāṭapalli, Mattapalli, Kētavaram, Vēdādri and Mangalagiri. Mangalagiri is not exactly on the bank of the river, but it is about 10 Kilometers from the river, Krishna.

The traditional account as given in his book entitled Śrī Mattapalli Mahātmyam, and a book-let of his Holiness Śrī Kēśava Tīrtha Swāmi, Published by the Mattapalli Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Kshētra, Mattapalli, is as follows.¹⁴⁴

"In the days of yore, at this holy place of Mattapalli, grant sages like Bhāradwāja and others worshipped Lord Nrisimha. In those unknown times, only sages and gods could worship the self revealed images of Lord Nrisimha in the cave. Later, the sages who had the welfare of this world at their heart, decided to throw open this holy place to the common people. An auspicious time for it came in Kaliyuga. The Lord appeared in a dream to Anumula Māchireṭṭi, who was

then ruling Taṅgeḍa, which is three kilometres off Maṭṭapalli, on the opposite bank of Krishna river. He was an ardent devotee. The Lord told him, "Son, nearby in the forest on the banks of the river Krishna, I have manifested myself in the form of Lord Nrisimha in a cave, where unknown to the outside world, gods and sages offer me their prayers. My sacred image has to be revealed now for the salvation of the people of kaliyuga. So, go there this very morning and reveal my image and you shall be blessed." The great devotee Machireddi woke up the next morning and accompanied by learned Brahmins and others searched all the caves on the banks of the river, Krishna, as ordained by the Lord. Sad and depressed Māchireḍḍi, who was completely tired, fell down to sleep in the forest. Once again the Lord appeared in his dream and said, "Son, don't feel sorry, get up and behold, near by there is an "Āre" tree on which, you will find a sacred eagle, called Garutmān. Go straight from that tree and you will find the cave, hidden behind foliage, where in, you will find my image". Machireddi woke up immediately and proceeded as he was told. There he beheld in the cave, the sacred image of the Lord in a seated posture with the well spread hood of 'Śēsha' over the head, fully adorned with śankha, chakra, gada etc. He also saw the flowers, sacred leaves and fruits that were lying there at the feet of the Lord, which were offered by the sages. Overjoyed, he revealed the holy place, ordered the construction of the mukhālaya etc and attained salvation.

Even today pūja (worship) is done with Āre leaves only.

"The name and the fame of Māchireḍḍi have lived down to this day and we still see his benevolence and benefaction on the golden "kalaśas" in the temple of Lord Śiva in Śrīśailam. The fort of Taṅgeḍa is now in ruins. After Māchireddi, several devotees, like Chennuri Giramma, attained salvation by their ardent worship at the feet of the Lord".¹⁴⁵

Chennuru Narasimha Rao, Chairman of the temple committee on interview said that "Chennuru Girāmma" belonged to his great grand fore fathers. She lived during the period of Aurangazēb. When Moghul forces were to attack this place, she prayed to the God to dispell the danger. Then the Lord created countless bees, and they attacked and drove the Moghul soldiers. Their attempt to capture this temple proved a futile exercise". But historically we have no record to support it.

On the rock above the door of the sanctum, the motif of Gaja Lakshmi with two elephants raising their trunks upwards on either side, is sculptured. The sanctum is a cave. The roof the of the garbhagriha, is a big rock.

The Lord manifested himself on a rock, which is the back side of the garbhagriha. Another rock spread like the hood of śēsha on it. The Lord is 1' in height. Seated in Padmasana, he holds 'chakra' in his upper right hand and Śankha in his left hand. He kept his lower left hand on his left knee and his right hand is not visible. On the left side of the Lord, there are decorated three 'nāmās' and two eyes which are considered as the form of Prahlāda, the ardent devotee of the Lord. To the left of the manifested Lord, there is a blackstone image of Lakshmi, which is 1 1/2' in height, in a sitting posture on a lotus. She holds lotus-flowers in her upper hands. Her lower right hand is in abhaya posture and the left hand is in 'Śuchi posture'.

Below the Lakshmi image, there is an image of Rajyā Lakshmi, which is carved on a rock. As Lakshmi is not visible to the visitors, the image of Rājya Lakshmi is installed for the 'darśan' of the public. It was consecrated in 1975.¹⁴⁶ She holds chakra in her upper right hand and Śankha in her left hand. She holds

lotus buds in her lower hands. She is in sitting posture. She is 1 1/4' in height. She wears a makuta on her head.

Before the presiding deity, at a lower level, the utsava idols of the Lord are installed. There are also copper images of Chakra Perumāṇḍia, Nammālvār and of two an Ālvār.

To the right side of the sanctum leading to the north door, which remains open only on "Mukkōṭi Ekādaśi", there are black stone images of eleven Ālvārs, seven of which face the west and the remaining four face east.

There is a trench on the left side of the Lord at some distance in the cave, which, it is believed, leads to the river, Krishna. The sanctum faces the west. The mukhamanṭapa has 21 pillars with a cement roof. Before the vaikunṭha dwāra (North door) there is a manṭapa with five pillars with cement roof. It was built in 1973-75. It is 21 x 18 feet. The mukhamanṭapa before the sanctum is 24 x 45 feet. The height of the mukhamanṭapa is about 20'. As there is no convenience to go round the sanctum, the pilgrims perform 'pradakshinas' around the Dhvajastambha and the stone image of Hanumān, which faces the Lord. There is a Ramanuja kutam (Kitchen of the Lord) to the north of the temple in the same premises, where in, the naivēdya of the Lord is prepared.

There are some choultries for the pilgrims which were constructed by the devotees consequent in the fulfilment of their desires by the Lord.

There is an entrance to the temple which faces the south. There is also a four pillared kalyānamanṭapa near the eastern choultries.

'Vaikhānasa āgama' is followed here. The priest of the temple is a Śrivaishṇava, who is a hereditary priest. There

is a vĕdic pandit, who recites Vĕdās and other mantrās on appropriate occasions. The daily programme of the temple is given below :

1. Suprabhātam — 5-00 A. M.
2. Abhishĕkam — 6-00 A. M.
3. Sahasranāma archana — 7-00 A. M.
4. Balabhōgam and Vinīyōgam — 7-45 A. M.
5. Darśanam — 8-00 to 9-00 A. M.
6. Archana Programme by the devotees — 9-00 to 11-00 A. M.
7. Ārādhana — 11-30 A. M.
8. Rājabhōgam (Mahānatvĕdyam) and Vinīyōgam to the public — 12 00 Noon.
9. Dvērabandhana — 12-30 Noon.
10. Re-opening the doors of the temple and Archana — 4-30 P. M.
11. Archana by the devotees — 5-00 to 7-00 p. m.
12. Natvĕdyam and Vinīyōgam — 8 30 P. M.
13. Temple doors remain closed — 9-00 P. M.

On every Friday there is a Sĕva of Āntāl at 8.00 P.M. with the procession of the devotees in the temple premises. Adhyayana utsavas preceds the annual festival of the Lord, for three days from Chaitra Śuddha Daśami to Dwādaśī (April). The annual festival is celebrated from Chaitra Śuddha Trayōdaśī to Bahula Tadiya. The programme of the Brahmōtsavas is as follows I

1. Dhvajārōhanam, Trayōdaśī.
2. Kalyāṇam at night, Chaturdaśī.
3. Ponna and Garuḍa Sĕvās, Pūrṇima.
4. Sadasyam, Pāṭiyami.

5. Chakravari, Vasantōtsavam, and Teppōtsavam-Vīdiya.

6. Dwādaśa sēvalu (12 sevas), Ekānta sēva (Pavalimpu sēva) at night - Tadiya

The following festivals are celebrated in the temple.

1. Chaitra Śuddha Pañyami-Ugādi, Panchānga Srāvaṇam (April)
2. Chaitra Śuddha Navami-Śrī Rāma Navami (April)
3. Āshadha Śuddha Ekādaśi (Toli Ekādaśi or Pedda Ekādaśi)-Harikatha and Bhōgam (July)
4. Śrāvaṇa Śuddha Ashtami, Krishṇa Ashtami-Bhāgavata Kālakshēpam. Birth of Śrī Krishna-Bhogam (August). Śrāvaṇa Śuddha Navami Uṭṭukottuṭa & Pallaki Sēva of the Lord.
5. Āśvīyuja Śuddha Daśami-Vijaya Daśami-Sēva (October).
6. Mārgaśīra Śuddha Ekādaśi-Mukkōti Ekādaśi (December).
7. Dhanurmāsam-Special worship to the Lord for a month (December-January).
8. Sankrānti Sēva, Bhōgam and viniyōgam (January).

The temple committee runs the temple, with liberal contributions from the pilgrims. On the occasion of the Brahmotsavas of the Lord, about 5000 devotees from local and from other districts of the state congregate. During these days one act plays, dramas, dances, Harikathas, Bhajans and songs afford entertainment to the pilgrims. The special feature of this temple is free feeding to all the pilgrims on the eve of Brahmotsavas and Mukkōti Ekādaśi for three and two days respectively. Nearly 4000 people visit the temple, on the day of Mukkōti Ekādaśi.

There is a belief that incurable diseases will be cured and the evil spirits, which make the people suffer, will be

driven out by the grace of the Lord, if one stays here for some period, as stated by some devotees.¹⁴⁷

The importance of the temple lies in the possession of a big conch, which is known as 'Dakshinā vrita Śankhamu', with which the 'abhiṣēkam' of the Lord is performed. If one keeps it near the ears, a sound like 'Om' comes out of it. It is a very rare Śankha. This type of rare Śankha is in the temple of Viśvēśwara at kāsī only. There are many stories of greatness of the Lord, which are widely current here.¹⁴⁸

MIRYALA GUDA TALUK

1. Salknoor

Salknoor is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from Miryālaguḍa, the headquarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narsimha Swāmy in the village. The Pujāri is a vaiṣṇava. The annual festival is celebrated for eight days from Phālguna Śuddha Ekādaśi to Bahuḷa Tadiya. The local Hindus congregate.

2. Vadapalli (Wazīrābād)

Vāḍapalli is situated at a distance of 25 KMS from Miryālaguḍem, the taluk head quarters.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple is three furlongs to the north of the village. The river Musi flows by on the west of the temple at a distance of one furlong, and the river, Krishna on the east at a distance of two furlongs. There is a ruined fort by the side of the temple, Which was constructed by the Kakatiya king, Prātapa-rudra.¹⁴⁹ There are a few mantapas with out roof, which are in a dilapidated condition, in front of the temple. It appears that it was a famous temple in ancient days.

There are four inscriptions, three inside the temple and the fourth outside the Simhadwara of the temple. There is a short inscription in Kannada engraved on a stone pillar, built in the mantapa of the Narasimha temple. It is written in archaic characters of about 7th century AD.¹⁵⁰ It speaks of one Mulkonṇaya Akshara Śubhāga, who came to the place for a short rest and departed.

The second inscription is on a stone, in the right side of the Simadwāra. Written in Telugu, it is dated S'1528, plavanga (=1608 AD).¹⁵¹ It is a donative inscription. The bhats of Dēvarakonḍa, Koṇḍaviḍu, Bellakonṇa and so on, who came to attend the marriages in the kōmaṭi houses at Vāḷapalli, as embled in the temple of Narasimha, where Janumailu Vīrappa, submitted that they should give phanjipalkalu, which they were getting from the komati house-hold during the marriage, to god Lakshmi Narasimha for daily offerings and lighting.

The third inscription is on a stone in the premises of the Narasimha temple, which is dated S'-1530 (=A.D. 1608) and written in Telugu. It records that when Mohammad Quli Qutb Shah was ruling at Golkonda, Amīran Mālik was appointed as Mokhasa (Governor) of Vazīrābād region and that his ministers, Telupunuri Kōnapa and Malaya Kholapu Samgōji gifted the village, Kothapalli, as "agrahāra" to god Narasimha Swāmi at the request of some elderly persons of Vāḷapalli.¹⁵²

The last inscription on a red stone in the temple, dated S'1541 (=A.D. 1619).¹⁵³ It records that Vēnkaṭa Bhattachārya, son of Parāśara Bhattachārya had visited Vajrapalli and made some custom in the temple administration.

The inner sanctum is six square feet.

Inside the sanctum, Lord Nārasimha is seated on a pedestal. He keeps his right leg on the ground and he folds his leg

at the knee. His consort, Lakshmi, is seated on his left lap. She hangs her legs down. The Lord holds ~~chakra~~ in his upper right hand and *Śankha* in his left hand. His lower right hand is in *abhaya* posture and his left hand is on the waist of his consort, Lakshmi. The Lord and his consort are 3' and 1 1/2' in height, respectively. The Lord has open mouth. There is a stone *prabha* surrounding the Lord and his consort, The Lord wears *makuta*, *hārās* and anklets Lakshmi holds a lotus-bud in her left hand and her right hand is on the waist of the Lord. The height of the pedestal is about 1 1/2. The Lord faces the east.

The *mukha mantapa* is 18 square feet in dimension. To the left of the 'antarala', in the corner, the image of *Chenchu Lakshmi*, is installed on a raised platform. It is 1 1/2' in height. Her right hand is in *abhaya* posture, while the left hand is hanging. To the right side of 'antarala' in the corner, there are twelve black stone images of *Āḷvārs* and six images of *Vaishnava Āchāryās*. There is also a stone image of *Ānjanēya* beside them. In the *mukha mantapa*, to the right, in the middle there are ten *Āḷvārs* in black stone on a raised platform attached to the north wall of the *mukha mantapa*. There is a four-pillared *Kalyāṇa mantapa* to the left of the *mukha mantapa* and the "yagna śāla" is to the right of the *mukha mantapa*. There is an enclosure to the temple with stone-wall.

Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. The priest is a *vaishṇava*. Every day worship is done and "naivēdya" is offered. The annual festival commences from *Māgha Suddha Ekādaśi* (February) and is celebrated for five days. The programme is given below.

1. *Garuḍa mudda-Ekādaśi*
2. *Talambrālu-Horse vehicle-Dwādaśi*
3. *Śēsha Vāhanam-Trayōdaśi*
4. *Ananta Vāhanam-Chaturdaśi*

5. Chakra Teertham, and Cultural programmes - Pourāmi.

About 2000 devotees from local and neighbouring villages, congregate on the last day of the festival. The cultural programmes afford entertainment to the pilgrims. Every day nearly ten people visit the temple.

This Narasimha Swamy's temple is one of the Pancha Nasasimha Kshētras on the banks of Krishna. An interesting feature in the temple is that there are two "deepās" on a lamp-stand before the idol of Narasimha Swāmi: The upper deepam always twinkles, whereas the lower one remains steady. It is firmly believed by the devotees that the twinkling is due to the respiration of the Lord as the 'deepam' is right below the nose of the Lord.

DEVARAKONDA TALUK

1. Sarampet

Sārapēt is situated at a distance of 26 Kms to the east of Hyderabad-Dēvarākonda road.

There is a temple of Stambhagiri Lakshmi Narasimhā Swāmy in the village. The stone image of the Lord is in the form of man-lion. The priest is a Śrivaishṇava. Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for ten days from Māgha Bahuḷa Pādyami to Daśami (February). The special feature of the festival is Rathōtsavam (Car-festival) on Saptami. About 3,000 Hindus, Local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate.

2. Yarugandla Palle

Yarugandla palle is situated at a distance of 59 Kms from Dēvarākonda, the headquarters of the taluk. Bugga Narasimha

Swāmy temple is on a hillock at a distance of 5 KMS from the village. The priest is a vaishṇava. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for 8 days from Phalguna Bahuḷa Tadiya to Daśami (March). About 3,000 Hindus, local and neighbouring villages, congregate without any distinction of caste or creed. The devotees take bath in the 'guṇḍam' on the hillock and they visit the temple.

3. Madnapur.

Madnāpur is situated at a distance of 42 KMS from Dēvarakoṇḍa. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. There are also two choultries here. The priest is a Brahmin. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for six days from Chaitra Śuddha chaturdaśi to Bahuḷa Chaviti (April). About 1500 Hindus, Local and from the nearby villages, congregate.

4. Tungapati Gowraram.

Tungapaṭi Gowrāram is situated at a distance of 29 Kms from Dēvarakoṇḍa. There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy, in a cave at a distance of 2 Kms from the village. The image of the lord here is known as 'Chalidona Narasimha Swāmy'. The pujāri is a Vaishṇava. Special worship is performed to the god on every saturday.

BHONGIR TALUK

1. Ibrahimpur

Ibrāhīmpur is situated at a distance of 16 Kms from the Rāigiri Railway Station. There is a temple of Lakshma Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for 3 days from Māgha śuddha vidīya to Chaviti (February). About 200 Hindus, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate.

2. Yādagirigutta. (Yādagiripalle)

The temple at Yādagirigutta is one of the most important temples in the state of Āndhra Pradesh. It is situated at a distance of 13 Kilometres from Bhōngir Railway Station and 4 Kilometres from Rāngir Railway Station on the Secunderabad-Kājipēt line of the South Central Railway. There is a hill near the village, which is known as Yādagirigutta on which the famous shrine of Śrī Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy stands at a height of about 300 feet. From the foot of the hill, there are two ways to the top of the hill.

‘Śrī Yādagiri Mahātmyam’, a modern work quotes a verse from Skanda Purāṇa, which says that Vyāsa Maharshi worshipped Narasimha at this place.¹⁵⁴

It speaks of the antiquity of the place in terms of the puranas. But historically there is no recorded evidence to support this view.

There are three kinds of sources from which we can get information regarding this holy shrine. They are Puranic sources, literary sources and historical sources.

Puranic Sources

Our main source of the study of this temple is ‘Śrī Yādagiri Mahātmyam’, compiled by the Dēvastāna Sthana chārya, Śrī Gōvārdhanam Narasimhāchārya, with quotations from Narasimha Purana, Skanda purana, Brahmanda purana and Padma purana.

Story of Manifestation of Narasimha

It is believed that Hiranya Kasipu was killed at Ahōbilam, where even now ‘Sthambhōdbhuta Narasimha (Narasimha

manifested from pillar) can be seen. Lord Narasimha became very furious. Brahma, Śiva, Lakshmi and Prahlāda prayed for His saumya (peaceful) form. Then he became "saumya" and granted boons to Prahlāda, who, in turn requested the Lord to stay there permanently. To this, Lord Narasimha said that he would manifest in a cave at Yadagiri on a hill. All the gods and others were pleased with the Lord and they began to worship him here.

The water with which Brahma washed his feet, reached a Kuṇḍam (pond) which is known as Viṣṇu Kuṇḍam and the water is known as "Viṣṇu teertham." The importance of this kuṇḍam, given the Skandapurana, is that the water makes the devotees wealthy and virtuous.

‘Yada Śaile maha Punyam
Viṣṇu Kunda miti Khyatam,
Teertha maishwarya dāyakam”
(Skanda Purāṇam)

From that time on words, the sages and the dēvatās (gods) began to worship Lord Narasimha after taking bath in it. As the sages worship the Lord, it is known here as Rishi Ārādhana (worship by the sages).

Derivation of the name of Yadagiri.

In the Trētāyuga there was a seer (rishi) named Vibhandaka, whose son was the famous Rishya Śringa. He had a son by name Yādava, who was a staunch devotee of Viṣṇu. He wanted to have "the sākshātkāra" of the Lord in the form of Narasimha. He came to this place to select a suitable and secluded place for doing penance to fulfil his heart's-desire. One day as Yādava was sleeping under a banian tree, Hanumān appeared in his dream and told him that Lord Narasimha was in a cave on the hill in icon-form (Archāva-

tāra). Yādava's pleasure knew nobounds. Next day he started his journey in search of the holy place, He took bath in the Vishṇu pushkarini and began to search the place of the Lord. It was a wild and dark forest. At last he found the cave and began his penance there with deep devotion. The Lord was pleased with his intense devotion and the sincerity of his purpose and appeared before Yādava. He then begged the Lord to show him the three supernal forms of the Lord, which had captivated his heart.¹⁵⁵ These Swarupās of Lord Viṣṇu are : Jwāla Nrasimha, Gaṇḍa bhēruṇḍa Narasimha and Yōgānanda Narasimha. Accordingly Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the three forms of Narasimha to Yādava. But Yādava was not satisfied with this fleeting view of the Lord. His spiritual hunger required that he should constantly remain in the presence of the Lord himself. He, therefore, begged the Lord to remain permanently on the hill in those three forms. The Lord, who was pleased with his profuse devotion, acceded to his request and began to live in the cave permanently in three forms.¹⁵⁶

Thus, the hill got its name "Yādavagiri", the corrupted form of which is yādagiriguṭṭa or yādāgiri palle. The three forms of Lord Narasimha can be seen at three places in the premises of the present temple, Ānjanēya, who appeared and guided Yādava, was there as a sentry protecting this place (kshētrapāla). The 'guṇḍam' where he took bath, can be seen to day. There is a tradition, which is popular among the local and the distant people.¹⁵⁷

There is a traditional story of this place. It was originally a thick forest area, where wild animals used to wander. Even the rays of the sun could not penetrate into the wild forest. One day the Lord appeared to the village officer in his dream and revealed the place of His divine abode in the forest and disappeared. Next day the village officer and the elite

of the village started in search of the sacred place. They too bath in the vishṇu pushkarinī and worshipped Āṇḁaynēya, who was near by. Afterwards they searched on the hill, which was surrounded by dense forests and furious animals. At last they were happy to find the image of the Lord with caste-marks between two rocks with the help of a flaming torch and every one of them became happy.

The village officer called on a Vedic Brahman by name Gundla palli Rāma Bhaṭṭu, who was well versed in Vedas and was also a rich person and entrusted to him was the responsibility of worshipping the Lord and maintaining the temple. Rāma bhaṭṭa accepted this responsibility with pleasure and devotion. He appointed sincere Śrīvaiṣṇavas to worship the Lord with devotion and dedication. The geneology of Gundlapalli Rama bhattu is given below

Gundla palli Rāma Bhaṭṭu

|

Venkata bhaṭṭu

|

Sōmaiah

|

Rāmaiah

|

Rādhā bāī = married to Bhāskarāyini Sītā Rāmaiah.

|

Kamala bāī = Anantha Rāmaiah

Now Smt. B. Kamala bai is the hereditary trustee and chairman of the temple committee of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy of Yādagirigutta.

Literary Sources.

The following books give some information about Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy of Yādagirigutta.

1. Sri Yadagirindra Satakamu.

It was written by Tiruvāi Vēnkata Kavi. He was a resident of Kolanupāka. He wrote hundred poems in praise of Śrī Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy of Yādagirigutta. He lived in 1840.¹⁵⁸

2. Sri Yadagiri Kshetra Mahatmyamu.

It is a small book consisting of 15 pages, written by Sādhu Vēnkata Nārayana Swāmi. The story of Yādagirigutta runs like thus.

A maharshi by name Ugra tapaswi was meditating on Himalaya mountain. An eight year old boy of yādava community, who wanted to see the god, came to the maharshi and became disciple. When the boy attained the age of 16, the maharshi came to know the end of his life. By that time, he taught him all the "dharma's." He told him that his end was very near and he could not live there alone after his death. So the maharshi advised him to go to the South, where he could find a small hill and do penance there for śākhātkāra of God. He blessed him that his desire would be fulfilled and the hill would be named after Yādava. After the death of his "guru", the disciple went on a pilgrimage to the South and came to Yādagiri for doing penance to fulfil his heart's desire of the "darśan" of the Lord. He began his penance in a cave. After many long years, Viṣṇu, pleased with his intense devotion and dedication, appeared before him and conferred a boon on him. Yādava praised the Lord in many ways and prayed the god to reside there permanently along with his consort Lakshmi. Then the Lord consented to reside there permanently.¹⁵⁹

As this maharshi was born in the caste of Yādava, the hill is known as Yādagiri. In course of time it came to be known as Yādagirigutta (hill of yādagiri).

3. Yadagiri Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Satakamu.

It is written by Kappa Vēnkata Rāma Rāju of Kurnool district in 1978. It is a book of nearly hundred poems in praise of Lord Narasimha. It is stated in the chapter of Kshetra Mahatmyam that the Lord appeared before Yādava rishi as Narasimha in the form of a flame. Later on, he appeared in the forms of Ugra, Yōgānanda, Gandabheruṇḍa and Lakshmi Narasimha. Yādava prayed the god to reside there permanently with his five forms (pancha Nrusimha rupas).¹⁸⁰

4. Yadagiri Kshetra Darsini

It is written by Gōvardhanam Narasimhachārya, Sthānā-Chārya of the Dēvasthāna of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy of Yādagiriguṭṭa. In this book, the stories of Hiraṇya Kaśipu, Prahlāda and the birth of Narasimha are given in Part I. In part II of this book, the history of the fulfilment of the desires of the devotees is given with "Swapna niḍarśanalu" as the name of the chapter and curing the incurable diseases of the devotees.¹⁸¹

5. Sri Yadagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Suprabhatamu

It is written in Sanskrit by Vangeepuram Nrisimha Chārya, who was a sthānachārya of the Dēvasthānam of Yādagiri Guṭṭa. He praises the Lord in deep devotion and brings out the greatness of the Lord.¹⁸²

6. Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Sahasranamam

Narasimha is also known as Jwāla (126), Phanitalpa (226) and Takshaka.(238)

Historical Tradition of the temple

Tradition records that Yādagiri, which is also known as Yādagiri gutta because of the temple of Lord Narasimha on the hill, is connected with the Yādava Chiefs, who constructed the temple of Lord Narasimha.¹⁶⁸ The Yādava kings ruled the area as vassals of the Kākatīyas of Warangal. Bhuvangiri fort is about 7 miles from Yādagiri gutta. As Yādava Kings are said to have constructed the temple of Lord Narasimha on the hill, it was known as Yādavagiri, which became Yādagiri.

Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

It is the chief shrine on the hill. A small Hanumān temple is in the compound of the shrine. The "Simha dwāsamu", built recently, has an imposing tower, studded with many puranic images,

After crossing the entrance, one finds on the right, a temple of panchamukha Ānjanēyaswāmi, who is a sentinel, watching this kshetra. (Kṣetrapāla)

Gandabherunda Narasimha Swamy

There is a big rock behind the Hanumān temple. A figure symbolising the aspect of Gandabhērunda Narasimha is believed to be at the bottom of the rock, where there is a horizontal opening, about 10 inches wide. This is said to be the place, where Narasimha Swamy appeared in the form of Gandab'hērunda, which is one of the three forms of Narasimha, before Yādava. There is a "Nandā deepam" burning day and night at this place.

After getting down the steps, we enter the mukha mantapa on the left, which is a big hall for congregations. The pillars of the mantapa reveals the sculpture of recent times.

The actual shrine of the god is situated in a natural cave. It is evidently clear that the garbha gudi is a cave. The walls around it and the mukha mantapa were built in recent times.

It is stated that Śrī Rāja Mōtīlāl Pīthi, father of Pannālāl Pīthi, of Hyderābād, who was the first president of the temple committee in 1954, visited the temple and stayed there for some time. He built gōpuram, prākara, old Simha dwāra and old mukhamantapa, sixty or seventy years back.¹⁶⁴ The temple faces the west. Infront of the doors of the mainshrine, there stands a Dhwaya Stambha. By the side of the Dhwaya Stamba, there is a very small shrine of garuḍa, who faces the Lord with folded hands.

After passing around the dhwaya sthamba, one enters the Garbha gudi, which is a natural cave of about 30 feet length and 12 feet width cut to a rock. The cave is formed under a huge rock which forms a sloping roof 5 feet in height in the middle of its passage inside. One has to bow his head and stood in humility as a mark of respect to the Lord, as the formation of the cave itself makes the devotees so involuntarily. At the end of the passage, there is a chest, Here the pilgrims drop in their cash and other costly offerings in fulfilment of their vows. Beyond that is the Holy of the Holies.

2. Jwala Narasimha Swamy

At the other end of the cave, there are the actual images of Lord Jwālā Narasimha Swāmy. We see there two rocks one behind the other with a cap like opening between the two. On the front face of the second rock is the image of a serpent, which is believed to be the aspect of the god, 'Jwālā Nrisimha'. There is a popular tradition that a divine serpent still moves about the image. The image of Jwālā Narasimha faces the west.

3. Yogananda Nrisimha Swamy

On the opposite rock, out side of it, facing us obliquely is another image seated in 'yogic' meditation, which is said to be the image of Yôgānanda Nrisimha, who faces the south east. He holds chakra and śankha in his upper hands and the lower hands are stretched forward and supported on the knees. He sits in Padmasana. He wears a makuta. The image is 1 1/2' in height.

These two rocks form an integral part of the cave. So there is no scope of having any modern structure in between them with out dismantling the natural cave,

4. Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

Apart from Jwala Nrusimha Swamy and Yogananda Nrusimha Swamy, there is an image of Nrisimha on a rock with Lakshmi seated on his left lap facing the south-west. He hangs down his right leg and folds his left leg. He holds chakra and Śankha in his upper hands. His right hand is in 'abhaya posture' and the left is on the waist of his consort, Lakshmi. The image is 3' in height.

On the same rock, on the left side of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, we can see the images of Nammālvāi and Uḍayavar (Rāmānuju) separately side by side.

As these images of the Lord are not visible normally to the worshippers, the silver images of Lakshmi and Nrisimha, in standing posture, are placed in front of the rock for the purpose of general visit and routine worship. The Lord has rolling eyes, lolling tongue, puffed up cheeks and prominent canine teeth. His thick mane is spread over his shoulders. All these features give him a fierce look. He holds chakra and śankha in his upper hands. His right hand is in 'abhaya mudra' and the left is in 'varada hasta'. He wears a makuta and 'hārās'.

He is about 3' in height. There is Lakshmi, standing on his left side.

The super structure of the temple is based on the huge rock which forms the cave.

Andal Sannidhi

A small sanctum of Gōḍādēvi stands to the left of the main shrine facing the north. There are two idols of Gōḍādēvi or Āṇḍāḷa. One is mūlavigraha and the other utsava vigraha, made of copper. Kum kum archana is done by the devotees daily here only. It is believed that Āṇḍāl is the incarnation of Lakshmi.

Alvarula Sannidhi

To the left side of Āṇḍāl Sannidhi, in a separate room there are black stone and metal images of Nammālvār, Tiruppān and Tirummangai Āḷvar and the images of Rāmānuja and Manavāla Mahāmuni.

Other temples on the hill

The temple of Panchamukha Anjaneya

The temple is in the premises of the main shrine. After going down a few steps from the old Simhadwāram, we find a temple of Hanumān, who has been watching this kshetra as a sentinel. This Hanuman is known as Panchamukha Ānjanēya with the aspects of Vānara, Narasimha, Khaga, Krōdha and Aśwa (Hayagreeva).

Hanuman Temple on the bank of Pushkarini

It is believed that before this kshetra, which came into prominence, Ānjanēya was doing penance there. He used to take bath in this pushkariṇi and worship god. The devotees

generally take bath in this pushkarīṇī, which is also known as vishṇu pushkarīṇī and worship the Hanumān there. It is the starting point of worshipping by the devotees.

Siva Temple

The only other temple is that of Śiva, who is consecrated in a small building of modern type.

Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here. The Sthanā Chārya supervises the daily programme in the temple so far as worship is concerned. There are six Śrī Vaishnava priests, who are trained in pāncharātrāgama and in Drāvida system. Now this temple has a centre to train the Archakas and it conducts examinations after training. Āradhana is performed to the god three times every day at 5.00 A.M. early morning 12.00 Noon and at 7.30 P.M.

Every day 'abhishēkham' is performed with the milk of cows. The Vedic pandit recites panchasuktas, panchōpa nishads and other Vedic hymns during the 'abhishēkham'. One may have clear and complete 'darśan' of the god at this time only. After abhishēkham, Tulasi Archana is done.

Daily Programme

1. Suprabhātam - 4.30 A.M.
2. Ārādhana - 5.00 A.M.
3. Naivēdyamu - 6.00 A.M.
4. Sarva Darśanam - 6.30 A.M.
5. Archana (Tulasi sahasranāmārchana & kumkuma archana at Āndaḥ) - 10.00 A.M.
6. Āradhana, Naivēdyamu & Sarvadarśanam - 12.00 Noon
7. Temple doors remain closed - 2.00 P.M. to 4.00 P.M.
8. Sarva Darśanam - 4.00 P.M.

9. Sēvas - 5.30 P.M.
10. Ārādhana - 7.00 P.M.
11. Archana (Tulasi Sahasranāmārchana & Kumkumār-
rchana at Āṇḍāl) - 7.30 P. M.
12. Naivēdyamu - 8.30 P. M.
13. Śayanōtsavam - 9.00 P. M.
14. Doors of the temple closed - 10.00 P. M.

The following festivals are celebrated during the year.

They are :

1. Ugādi - Chaitra Śuddha Pādyami (April).
2. Śrī Rāma Navami, Navarātras. - Chaitra Śuddha
Navami (April).
3. Tiru nakshatram of uḍayavar - Vaiśakha Śuddha
Panchami (May)
4. Śrī Nṛsiṃha Jayanti - 3 days worship. Vaiśakha
Śuddha Chaturdaśi (May) .
5. Tiru nakshatram of Nammālvār - Vaiśakha Śuddha
Pūrṇima (May).
6. Āṇḍāl Tiru Nakhatram - Śrāvāṇa Śuddha Tadiya
(August).
7. Dasara, Śarnnavarātras - Āshvēcya Śuddha
Daśami (October).
8. Tiru nakshatram of Manavāḷa māmuniḡaḷ - Kārtika
Śuddha Panchami (November).
9. Dhanurmāsam - worship (before dawn for 15 days
and early worship after dawn for 15 days) - Dece-
mber-January.
10. Mukkōti Ekādaśi - Dwara Darśnotsavam. Poushya
Śuddha Ekādaśi (December).

11. Vaikuntha utsavam of Nammālvār—Poushya Śuddha Purnīma (January).
12. Śāttumarai of Rāmānuja – Poushya bahuḷa Pāḍyami (January).
13. End of Mārgaḷi (Dhanurmāsam) – Gōḍa Kalyāṇam. Poushya Bahuḷa Dwādaśi (January).

Adhyayanotsavam (Adhyayanotsavam, from Marga-sira Śuddha Ekadasi to Purnima (December)

This annual festival is celebrated for five days. Every day in the morning, there is a sēva. Recitation of Nālayira Prabhandham and conference of the Drāviḍa scholars, who are well versed in the Drāviḍa Prabandhas, take place every day. The sēvas of the Lord, take place in full decoration. In the night of purnīma, parama padōtsavam is celebrated in a be fitting manner, attended by a large congregation of the devotees.

Brahmotsavam of the Lord

The brahmotsavam of the Lord is celebrated from Phālguna Śuddha vidīya to Dwādaśi (March) for nine days.

S. No.	Morning	Evening	Name of the day
1.	Swasti vāchakam	Ankurārpanamu	— Vidiya
2.	Dhwajārōḥaṇamu	Bhēripuja-Dēvata invitation-Havanam	— Tadiya
3.	Havanam, Vēda-pārāyanamu & Alankāra Sēva	Śēsha vāhanam	— Chaviti

4.	Havanam, Vēda- pārayanam & Alankāra Sēva	Hamsavāhanamu	—	Panchami
5.	— do —	Ponnavāhanamu	—	Shashti
6.	— do —	Simha Vāhanamu	—	Saptami
7.	— do —	Edurukōlu-Aśwa vahanamu	—	Ashatami
8.	Hanmanta Sēva	Gajavāhanam. Kalyānamu	—	Navami
9.	Śiva Garuḍa Seva	Rathōtsavam (Car - festival)	—	Daśami
10.	Poornāhuti - Chakra teerthām	Dōpu Śrīpushpa- yāgamu-Śringāra Dōlōtsavam u.	—	Ekādaśi
11.	Ashtōttara Śata Ghaṭābhi Śhēkam		—	Dwādaśi

Nearly one Lakh devotees attend this annual function from far and wide.

The procession of idols (utsava vigrahas), is taken from the third day of Brahmōtsavas on Śesha (serpant), Hamsa (Swan), Ponna (a tree which is dear to the Lord), Simha (Lion), Aśwa (horse) and Gaja (elephant) vāhanas (vehicles). The car-festival is on the evening of the ninth day. The Ratham, well decorated with the utsava vigrahas, is taken around the office room and is brought back to the shed (Ratha-śāla). The Rathōtsavam of the Lord is worth visiting. There is a belief that one who visits the Lord on the chariot, does not have rebirth. The following verse in Sanskrit is referred to in support of the view.

“Rathōtsavam Mādhavan drushtva
Punarjanma na vidyate”

It is stated that Brahmōtsavam is a 400 year old celebration, drawing devotees from the entire state. The offerings are made by the devotees in cash and kind in fulfilment of their vows. During the Brahmōtsava, literary and cultural programmes are also organised, in a separate hall known as "Saraswati kaḷā Mandiram", morning and evening for five days.

The Executive Officer, appointed by the Endowments department assists the temple committee with his staff in the smooth functioning of the temple. The contribution of the devotees who visit the temple is the main source of income to temple. It is 'A' class temple in Telangana area.

A Sanskrit school, known as Sanskrit Vidyāpīṭh, is run here for students preparing to appear for the entrance examination, conducted by the Osmania University, Hyderabad. The temple provides free coaching, boarding and lodging to the students of all communities.

A school of Āgama is also established to coach the priests in the pāncharātra system with free boarding and lodging. It conducts two examinations for the priests every year. This temple contributes a considerable amount of money for the renovation of the old temples and for the maintenance of other institutions in the district of Nalgonda.

It is a general belief that the desires of the devotees after worshipping the Lord do not go unfulfilled. Incurable diseases are cured by the Lord himself. Generally the devotees, particularly the sick, who are suffering from chronic diseases, take bath in the Viṣṇu pusukariṇi on the hill and go to the temple to worship the Lord in wet clothes. They reside there for a mandalam (forty days).

There are so many persons residing on the hill to cure

their incurable diseases by the Lord, who acts not only as a physician but also as a surgeon as well.¹⁶⁵ Komaramma is a staunch devotee of the Lord, who recovered her health by the grace of Lord Narasimha in the year 1954 A.D. She is still residing there in the worship of God. There is a separate chapter entitled "Swapna nidarshanalu" in Yadagiri Kshētra Darsini, a book describing the importance and the mythological history of the temple, written by the Dēvasthāna Sthānā Chārya, Śrī Govārdhanam Narasimhā Chārya of Yādagiriguṭṭa who collected material regarding those who were blessed by the Lord, specially in curing the incurable diseases.¹⁶⁶

This temple has been very famous for the past forty or fifty years attracting devotees and fulfilling their desires.¹⁶⁷ This is one of the ancient and famous temples in the Telangana. It attracts the rich and poor from far and wide of all castes of Hinduism. It is stated¹⁶⁸ that Bellam Koṇḍa Śīta Rāmaiah established an 'Yantra' here about 50 years back. Since then, the temple has become famous and there is an ever ending flow of people to this sacred place from nook and corner of the state through out the year. During Brahmōtsavas of the Lord, the congregation of the devotees exceeds one lakh.

Another interesting and noteworthy feature of the temple is that it has immeasurable influence on Hindus. Some of them have the name of this place and they name their children after the place according to their social hierarchy. The names of the persons, who have their names initially as Yadagiri, which is the abode of the Lord in Archa form (Icon form), are Yādagiri, Yādagiri Reddy, Yādagirirao, Yādagiri Swāmi, Yādagiri Āchārya, Yādaiah, Yādadri, Yādanna, Yādamma, Yādavva and Yādi (a shortened name of Yādagiri).

It is very clear from the names of the persons mentioned above that the Lord impressed the minds of his devotees with

the name of the places, where He dwells now in the icon form. As the place is very famous in the state as Narasimha Kshētra, the people like to give the name of the place to their children rather than the namē of the Lord, in view of the importance of the place. This is one way of giving the name of the place to their children.

The other practice widely spread is the name of Lord Narasimha Swamy, which the devotees like to have for their children. This practice is an ancient one, which goes back to the Gupta age in ancient Indian History. A Gupta king bore the name of Narasimha, which is a well known name of Lord Narasimha. He was Narasimha Gupta. He died some time before A.D. 473.¹⁶⁹

Thus, the names of Yādagiri and Narasimha Swamy are generally found in and out side Āndhra Pradesh. The temple of Lord Narasimha of Yādagiri gutta in Telangana region is next to the temple of Śrī Vēṅkatēswara Swāmy of Tirupati (Tirummalai) in its pomp and glory, attracting devotees not only from Āndhra Pradesh, but also from all other states of India.

3. Peddireddigudem

Peddireddigudem is situated at a distance of two kilometres from Yādagiri gutta and eight kilometres from Bhōngir. At the foot of the hillock, there is a temple of Narasimha, known as pāta (old) Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy.

There is a local tradition relating to the temple. It says¹⁷⁰ that "Yādava Maharshi did penance here. When Lord Narasimha left this place and settled on the hill of Yādagiri Palle, the maharshi followed the Lord, through the crevice of the sanctum, which can be seen now. Therefore the Lord is

here known as pāta (old) Narasimha Swāmy, whereas the Lord on the hill of Yadagir Palke, which is two kilometres from this temple, is known as "Yādagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy",

There is Śiva temple beside a kōnēru "on the hillock. There are also a few choultries and a Kālyāṇa mantapa.

The Simhadwāra of the temple faces the north. Next to it, there is a mukha mantapa, with an Āṇḍāl Sannidhi in it. There are two doors to the sanctum, one faces the east and the other to the south. The pilgrims enter into the sanctum through the east door, which faces the Hanumān temple, in the mukhamantapa after crossing the steps. After the 'darśan' of the Lord, they leave the sanctum through the other door, which leads them to the mukhamantapa, where there is an "Āṇḍāl Sannidhi" in it.

There is a big rock, on which the roof of the temple is built up with stones. The area of the sanctum is $7\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ feet. The rock, which forms the back side of the garbhagriha, is cut in depth so as to form the roof of the rock, on which the Lord manifested Himself. The rock is $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The Lord facing east 2' in height. He is standing. His face, eyes legs are visible. The Lord has kōrameesalu, two canine teeth and three "nāmās" in silver. To the left of the head of the Lord, there is the head of Lakshmi with two silver eyes and "nāmās". The Lord holds 'Chakra' in his upper right hand and the 'śankha' is in his left hand. His lower hands are not visible. To the right side of the Lord, there are two metal images of Narasimha Swāmy and Lakshmi dēvi, standing, 2' and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in height respectively and they are installed on a pedestal.

The area of the mukhamantapa is $21 \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ feet. There are two temples in it, one is Hanuman temple and the other is "Āṇḍāl Sannidhi."

Pāncharātra Āgama is being flowed here. The priests of the temple are Śrivaishṇavas. The daily programme of the Lord is given below :

1. Ārādhana – 7-00 A. M.
2. Bālabhōgam and Viniyōgam – 8-00 A. M.
3. Abhishēkam – 9-00 A. M.
4. Rājabhōgam and Viniyōgam – 12-00 Noon.
5. Doors remain closed – 1-00 P. M.
6. Darśanam – 2-00 to 8-00 P. m.
7. Bhōgam – 8-30 P. M.
8. Doors remain closed – 9-00 P. M.

The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for five days from Māgha Śuddha Dwadaśi to Bahuja pāḍyami (February). The programme is as follows :

1. At evening Swasti Vāchakam and Ankurārpaṇa — Dwādaśi.
2. Morning – Hanumān Seva, Evening – Edurukōlu. Night – Tiru Kalyāṇam — Trayodaśi.
3. Sadasyam and Seva — Chaturdaśi.
4. Morning – Garudaseva, Night – Ratōtsavam (Car-festival) – Pournīma.
5. Morning – Chakra tēertham — Bahuja Pāḍyami.

Nrisimha Jayanti, Āṇḍāl Tiru Nakshatram, Dasara, Deepāvali and other festivals are celebrated here. On the day of Dasara (October), the Lord goes out of the temple on a vehicle for “Samīpuja”.

Every day nearly 150 pilgrims, from the surrounding and other districts visit the temple. On Saturdays and Sundays

the number of pilgrims goes upto 400-500. There is a heavy rush to the temple during the months of Śrāvaṇa (August) and Kārtika (November). Some people worship "Satyanārāyaṇa" (Satyanārāyaṇa vratam) at this temple. They visit the temple for the celebration of 'Keśa khandana' and marriages in this temple. About 5000 devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate on the eve of the car-festival during the Brahmotsavas. It is a general phenomenon the the pilgrims, after taking the 'darśan' of Yadagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy visit this temple with the notion that the Lord here is pāta (old) Narasimha Swamy.

4. Maqdoompalle.

Maqdoom palle is situated at a distance of 6 KMS from Bhōngir, the head quarters of the taluk.

There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The priest is a Golla. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for there days from Māgha Śuddha Chaviti to Shasti (February). About 1000 Hindus, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate. There are five choultries for the pilgrims.

RAMANNAPET TALUK

1. Bijalapur

Bijalapur is situated at a distance of 48 KMS from Bhōngir Railway Station. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for a day on Māgha Śuddha Ekādaśi (February). Local Hindus participate in the the celebrtion.

2. Venkatapur

Vēnkaṭapur is situated at a distance of 64 KMS from the Bhōngir Railway Station. There is a temple of Matsyagiri

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on a hillock at a distance of two kilometres from the village. There are five big "gundams" (pools) of water on the hillock.

There is a local tradition which says¹⁷¹ that "One night Lord Narasimha Swamy appeared in a dream to one of the saints and directed him to worship Him in the month of Pushyam (January). Accordingly, the saints worshipped the foot-prints of Lord Narasimha Swamy."

"There are block fish in the gundams and it is said that any one trying to catch them, would die on the spot. About 50 years back, some policemen tried to catch the fish, but five of them lost their lives immediately and others fell unconscious. They could regain their consciousness only when their fellows promised to drop silver fish in the gundam." As there are fish in the gundam, the Lord is called Matsyagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy (Mastya-fish, giri-hill).

The annual festival is celebrated on all Mondays and Saturdays in the month of Pushyam (January). About 3000 Hindus, local and from nearby villages, congregate. The devotees take bath in the "gundam" (water pond) and go round the temple in wet clothes and offer cocoanuts to the Lord.

3. Kakkireni.

Kakkirēni is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Rāmānapēt, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the village. The Pujāri is a Brāhmin. The annual festival is celebrated for five days from Chaitra Śuddha Chaturdaśi to Bāhuja Tadiya (April.) The local Hindus congregate. It is of local significance.

NIZAMABAD DISTRICT NIZAMABAD TALUK

1. Nizamabad Town.

Nizāmābād is the district head quarters of the same name. There is a small temple at Thānāgali in the town. It is accomodated in the house of Narasimhadās.

There is a sanctum for the Lord. The Lord is carved on a slab of stone. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and the śankha in his lower hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and his left hand is embracing Lakshmi. The Lord is in sitting posture. He hangs down his right leg and folds his left leg at the knee, on which Lakshmi is seated. The Lord wears a makutam, which is in a pointed shape. He has also silver "meesālu", ears, and a makuta on his head. The Lord is 1 1/2' in height and his consort, Lakshmi 1' in height.

To the right side of the sanctum, there is a black stone image of Nammālvar in the mukha maṇṭapa. There are two Ālvārs of black stone images to the left of the sanctum, in the mukha mantapa. To their left is the black stone image of Ranganāyaka lying on śēsha. There are utsava idols of the Lord in the sanctum before the presiding deity. Madhwa tradition of worship is followed here. Every day "naivēdyam" is offered. The Pujāri is a Madhwa.

The annual festival is celebrated from Vaiśākha śuddha shashti to pournima (May). It starts with 'abhishēkam' to the Lord on shashti. On Vaiśāka śuddha Trayōdaśi (May), Narasimha Jayanti is celebrated. The birth of Narasimha is revealed to the devotees on that day by a learned vedic pandit. Kalyanam is also celebrated for the Lord.

The temple is the private hereditary property of Narasimha dāsu. He runs the temple and performs rituals and

festivals with donations from the devotees. About 100 devotees, local and from other places, congregate during the kalyāṇōtsavam. Every day nearly ten local people visit the temple.

2. Dharipalle.

Dharipalle is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from the Sirnapalle Railway Station on Secunderābād-Manmād line. Narasimha Swāmy in the form of a stone-sāligrām is worshipped here. Narasimha Navarātra utsavas are celebrated from Āśviyuja Śuddha Pāḍyami to Daśami (October) for ten days. Local Hindus congregate.

3. Binola.

Binōla is situated at a distance of 24 KMS from Nizamabad.

There is a temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village. The image of the Lord is in the form of man-lion. The annual festival is celebrated from Vaiśaka śuddha shasti to Purnīma (May). The local Hindus congregate. It is of local significance.

4. Manikbandar.

The village is 9 KMS from Nizamabad, The temple of Aghōra Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is on a hillock, 1/2 KM to the west of the village. The temple is formed by a big rock. It is a cave, in which the Lord was consecrated on 21-2-1969.¹⁷²

There are 67 stone-steps to reach the temple on the hillock. The sanctum is under a big rock. It is a cave. The back side of the sanctum is a wall. The roof of the sanctum is a big rock. The Lord and his consort, Lakshmi and Āndāl are installed on a small raised platform.

The Lord is 1 1/2' in height. He holds 'Chakra' in his upper right hand and 'Śankha' is in his left hand. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya' posture and his left hand is on 'Gada'. The Lord wears a makutam. Above the makuta of the Lord, there is a serpent with five hoods. The Lord has long beard. He is standing on a lotus flower. The pedestal, lotus, Lord, śēsha phani and prabha are carved on a single black stone. The Lord wears hārās. He appears to be cheerful. To the left of the Lord, his consort, Lakṣmi, in black stone is installed. She is standing on a lotus-flower. The pedestal, lotus, and the goddess are carved on a single slab of black stone, which is 1 1/2' in height. Her two lower hands seem to show some thing on her sides. She holds lotus-flowers in her upper hands. She wears a makuṭa and hārās. Behind her legs, a Swan is standing. To the left of Lakṣmi, is a black stone image of Āṇḍāl. It is about 1' in height. She holds a lotus flower in her right hand and her left hand hangs down. The cave is 6 x 15 feet. The Lord and the entrance to the cave face the south. In front of the cave, in the open space on the hillock, there are images of Ānjanēya, Saraswati, Śēsha, Nandi, a Lingam and Vināyaka.

The priest is a padmaśāli of Mārkaṇḍēya Gōtram. He worships the Lord every day. The annual festival of the Lord takes place on the day of Nrisimha Jayanti (May). On that day, the kalyaṇōtsavam and fire-sacrifice are performed. About 100 devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate on that occasion. The other festival is śami pūja (Dasara) performed at this temple. On this day nearly 300 people, local and from neighbouring villages, assemble at the temple to pay their respects to the Lord. Every day nearly ten pilgrims visit the temple. This number exceeds on Saturdays, particularly in the month of Śrāvaṇa (August).

2. ARMUR TALUK

1. Armur

Armūr, the head quarters of the taluk of the same name,

is situated at a distance of 25 KMS from Nizāmābād. There is a very small temple of Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy near the mosque and it is very near the burial ground of Muslims in the town. There is a broken image of Narasimha, carved on a stone, lying in the burial ground.

The temple facing east is in a dilapidated condition, built with bricks on a raised platform with stone and mud, with four rows of steps, some of which fell down. The raised platform is 3' high from the ground level. The height of the walls of the three sides of the temple is about 4'. The plinth area of the temple is 3 square feet. The mosque is to the north of the temple.

On the wall of the temple facing the east, there is an image of Śrī Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy which is not clearly visible. The marks of worship by the devotees with turmeric and saffron on the image, are visible. It is stated that there is a tradition to worship the image only during the month of Śrāvana (August) by the devotees. Most of the "paṭkārīs" worship this Lord during that period in particular and others in general.

2. Jalalpur

Jalālpur is situated at a distance of 18 kilometres from Armur, the headquarters of the taluk and 43 KMS from the Nizāmābād Railway Station. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village.

3. Nagapur

Nāgapur is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Armur. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village.

4. Chout Palle

Chout Palle is situated at a distance of 48 KMS from the Indalvāi Railway Station. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for one day on Vaiśākha śuddha Ekādaśī (May). About 5,000 people, local and from the nearby villages, of all communities, congregate.

5. Bheemgal

The village is situated at a distance of 35 kilometres from Ārmur, the taluk head quarters. Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy temple is now at Pedda Vēmugallu or Bada Bheemgal. "Kasava" is the name of the village which is known to the ordinary people, which is one kilometre from Beemgal. The temple of the Lord on the hillock is situated at a distance of 2 1/2 KMS from Kasava.

There are no archaeological or historical evidences relating to the temple. A few modern works give some information about this temple. They are :

- a) Nimbāchala Mahātmyam.
- b) Koravi Goparaju's Simhāsanadwātrimśika and
- c) Sreemannimbagiri Narasimha Śatakam.

Nimbachala Mahatmyam

It is the sthala purāṇa of this place. It is said that it is Brahma Kaivārtha purāṇānthargatam. It is written in Sanskrit, and as published in 1884 A.D. Nambi Śrīdhar Rao, a resident of the village is translating it into Telugu language. In Sthala purana, nowhere is the authorship mentioned. Brahma Kaivarta purāṇa was written by Vyāsa Maharshi. But there is no mention of him in the present Brahma Kaivārtha purāṇa.

Story of sthala mahatmyam

The traditional legend is as follows.¹⁷³

“To atone his sin, Brahma, who saw Pārvati on the eve of her marriage with an ulterior motive, attracted by her matchless beauty, selected this place for his penance. Pleased with his intense devotion, Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the form of Narasimha and atoned his sin. Brahma prayed to the Lord to settle here permanently. To this, Narasimha accepted and fulfilled his desire.

After a long time Dharmapāla came hunting to this place. Here he saw the Lord and was pleased with the calm and quiet atmosphere prevailing at that area. Then he arranged for the smooth functioning of the temple and conducted the utsavas and the festivals”,

The remaining stories are the puranic stories. They are :

- (i) The story of the incarnation of Narasimha
- (ii) Prahlada Charitra
- (iii) The story of Dharmapāla and
- (iv) The story of Hiranya kaśipu etc,

Koravi Gopa raju wrote ‘Kathā Prabandham’ entitled ‘Simhāsana-dwātrimśika’. His paternal uncles were ministers of Rācherla Kumāra Singama of Rāchakoṇḍa Kumāra Singama Nāyadu came to the throne after 1387 A.D. Hence Koravi Goparaju lived in the first part of the 15th century A.D.¹⁷⁴

Dr. Diwākara Vēṅkatāvadhāni, states that Koravi Gōparāju lived in the first part of the fifteenth century.¹⁷⁵ Nambi Limbādri, a resident and teacher of Bheemgal, states that Koravi Gōpa Rāju belongs to Bheemgal only.¹⁷⁶ In the

Avatarika, Koravi Goparaju mentioned the name of Vēṃugaḷḷu in his book entitled "Simhāsanadwātrimśika."¹⁷⁷

In view of these facts, we may say that though this temple is an ancient one by tradition, on the literary evidence of Simhāsanandwātrimśika, it may not be wrong to state that this temple existed in the early part of 15th century A. D.

There are two shrines dedicated to Lakṣmī Narasimha Swamy. The presiding deity of Śrī Lakṣmī Narasimha Swāmy is in a cave on the hill, known as Limbādri guṭṭa (Limbādri hill), which is at a distance of 3 1/2 kilometres from Bhemgal. There is a separate temple for utsava vigrahas in the village, Bhemgal. The annual festival is celebrated on the hill. The utsavā Vigrahas are taken to the hill for that purpose and after the festival, they are taken back to the temple, in the village. All the festivals, except the utsavas, are celebrated in this temple, which is in the middle of the village.

Sri Limbādri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy

The temple is on the hill. There are two ways to reach the temple, one for vehicles and the other for the pedestrians. On the hill, there is a well constructed "kōṇēru" near the kalyāṇa maṇṭapa. In front of the "kōṇēru", there is an image of Hanumān. There is a choultry also for the devotees near the kalyāṇa maṇṭapa. From Kalyana mantapa, there are nearly (90) steps to reach the temple on the hill. From the entrance, there are five steps leading into the cave. Here one may stand erect. Here on the right and left, there are two colourful newly made images of Yama standing as Dwārapalakās. From these images, one has to go lowering his head and half bending to a distance of 50 feet to reach the Garbhagriha, taking three turns. The height of the passage is one metre.

The garbha gudi 9' x 18' is in a small cave. Śrī Lakṣmī Narasimha Swāmy with Lakṣmi seated on his left lap is in

yogic posture. He is sitting comfortably crossing his legs. He is in Saumya (peaceful) form. He holds śankha in his upper left hand and chakra in his upper right hand. The lower right hand is in abhaya posture. His left hand is embracing Lakshmi. A linen cloth is carved as if a belt going through his knees. He has open mouth and lolling tongue. He wears a crown on his head. The image of the Lord is carved on the rock with a stone prabha around it. All this is carved on a slab of stone. The height of the image is about 3'.

The other black stone images are of Kṛiṣṇa, Arjuna, Hanumān and Prahāda. Near Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy's image, there is a small stone image of Prahāda, who faces the south. There are two small stone idols of Ājvārs. There are some black Salagrāmas in the sanctum, before the idol of Śrī Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, which are meant for "Abhishekam".

Pancharatra Agama is followed in celebrating the utsavas and the festivals. But in worshipping the god, Madhava tradition of Tantrasāra of Mudhvāchārya is followed. They use sandal paste for caste marks on the forehead of the Lord. Every day "abhishekam" to the Lord is performed at 10.00 A.M. The Tulasi Archana is done by the Pujari every day.

Except the annual festival (utsavam), all other festivals are celebrated at the temple of the utsava vigrahas in the village of Bheemgal.

During the abhishekam of the Lord on the hill, the priest recites the Vedic hymns like 'Lakshmi Suktam' and 'Purusha Suktam'. The traditional Madhva mantras are also chanted during the sacred bath of the Lord. The programme of worship to the Lord is of the duration of 3 to 4 hours from 10.00 A.M. onwards. After this programme, the door of the temple re-

mains closed. The temple remains open from 10-00 A.M. to 2r00 P.M. only every day.

The following festivals are celebrated at the temple of the utsava vigrahas in the village.

1. Ugādi-Chaitra Śuddha Pāḍyami (April).
2. Śree Rāma Navami-Chaitra Śuddha Navami (April).
3. Nrisimha Jayanti-Vaiśāka Śuddha Shaṣṭi to Purnima (May).
4. Śrī Krishṇa Jayanti-Śrāvaṇa Śuddha Ashtami (August).
5. Vijaya Daśami-Āśviyuja Śuddha Daśami (October).
6. Deepāvali-Āśviyuja Bahula chaturdaśi (November).
7. Vasantōtsavam-Phālguna Bahula pāḍyami (March).

The Annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from Kartika

Śuddha Shaṣṭi to Bahula vidiya (November),

1. Utsava vigrahas are taken to the hill-Shaṣṭi.
2. Ankurārpana-Saptami
3. Dhvajārōhaṇam-Ashtami,
4. Hōmam (Fire sacrifice)-Navami.
5. Kalyāṇōtsavam-Daśami.
6. Hōmam and bali-Ekādaśi.
7. Chakra perumāṇḍla sēva-Dwādaśi.
8. Hōmam and bali-Trayōdaśi,
9. Dōlōtsavam-Chaturdaśi.
10. Car-festival (Rathōtsavam) at 4.00 P.M. Purnima.
11. Śēsha Hōmam and Chakra teertham-Bahula pāḍyami.

The utsava vigrahas are brought back from the hill to the temple in the village on Pādyami.

12 Puṣpayāgam (Nāgavalli), koṇḍabali and Edurukōlu - Vidiya.

The priests are hereditary. They have lands to run the temple and the liberal contributions from the devotees is the main source of income to the temple.

Generally during the utsavam of the Lord, there is a large congregation of about 6000 devotees, from local and other districts. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), about 50 people visit the hill to pay their respects to the Lord. This month is supposed to be a sacred one to worship the god. Every day about 10 people visit the Lord.

The Lord of the hill is known as Limbādri Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy. So the people have the name of Limbādri from the sacred name of the hill, where Lord Narasimha with Lakshmi resides in Archā form (iconform). The Hindus, rich and poor, like to name their children as Limbādri, but in different way to meet their social status. They are Limbādri, Limbanna, Limbi, Limbaḍu, Limbā Redḍi and Limbāchārya. Very often we come across these names, particularly in Nizāmābād district and rarely in other districts.¹⁷⁸

The tradition is that after taking bath in the "kōṇēru" the devotees go in wet clothes to the temple bending their waists completely to reach the garbhagriha and pray to Lord to fulfil their cherished desires.

6. Balkonda.

This village is 12 KMS from Ārmur, the head quarters of the taluk. The temple of Mudgala Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is accommodated in the house of Harāchārya Vēṅkatā Chārya. There is a "kōṇēru" to the west of the temple. It

is said that it was established 200 years back. ¹⁷⁹ As the images of Narasimha and Lakshmi are brought from the village, Mudgala, the Lord here is known as Mudgala Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy.

The garbha griha is a small room 4 x 2 1/4 feet. There are three marble images of Narasimha, Lakshmi and Prahlada. The Lord has fourhands. He has chakra in his upper right hand and the Śankha is in his left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and the left is stretched forward and supported on his left knee, holding a lotus with his fingers. The Lord is sitting on a lotus in padmasana. The Lord has Silver makuta, kōrameesālu and eyes. He has 'Silver Kavacham' on his body. There is a hood of śēshā on his hand. The Lord is 1 1/4' in height.

To the left of the Lord, the image of Lakshmi is installed. Her lower right hand is in abhaya hasta and the left hand is hanging down. She is standing. She is 1' in height. To the right side of the Lord, is the image of Prahlāda, folding his hands together. It is 1' in height. He is standing.

Madhwa traditions is followed here. The priest is a Madhwa, He is a hereditary priest, who is the owner the temple, and Vēnkaṭa Ramaṇā Chārya, is the present priest of the temple. Every day he worships the Lord. The annual festival of the Lord takes place from Vaiśākha śuddha śaṣthi to pourṇima (May). "Abhishēkham" to the Lord, Sahasra-nāmārchana, discourses on Bhāgavata purāna and poor feeding are the features of the annual festivāl. During these days nearly a hundred pilgrims and on pourṇami day, about 500 people, local and from distant places, like Soan, Nizāmābād, Ārmoor, Renjerla, Yerugaṭla, Bhaisa and Vēmūlwāḍa, congregates and food is served to them free of cost. Dasara

Navarātras and other festivals are celebrated in the temple, which have local importance. There is a choultry for the pilgrims. The main source of the income to the temple is from the liberal contributions of the pilgrims only. Vēukata Ramaṇa Chārya is the hereditary owner of the temple. Every day nearly ten people visit the temple.

KAMAREDDI TALUK

1. Chukkāpur.

Chukkāpūr is situated at a distance of 17 1/2 KMS from the Kāmāreddi Railway Station. The Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy temple is 3 Kilometres away from the village. There is neither historical nor literary evidence regarding the temple. Some information has been gathered from interviewing the local people and the priest in particular. There is a tradition which speaks about the temple.¹⁸⁰

“At a distance of one furlong from the present temple, there was the original temple. In course of time, the original temple became old and ruined. As it was unfit to the Lord, He chose a well, by name “Mangābāi bāvi” in place of the temple. The Lord went on without worship for many days. The Lord appeared in the dream of the head man of the village and revealed His presence and ordained that man to worship Him daily.”

As mentioned above, still there is an old temple, which is in a ruined condition. But it is very small.

The Temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

On a single slab of stone, Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy with Lakshmi on his lap is sculptured along with a prabha around the image of the Lord. The Lord has fourhands. He holds ‘chakra’ in his upper right hand and śankha in his left

hand. He has a lotus in his lower right hand. His left hand is on the waist of Lakshmi. She is seated on the left lap of the Lord. The Lord stretches his knees and keeps his feet on the peetham. The image of the Lord is 2' in height. Lakshmi, the consort of the Lord, holds a lotus in her left hand and her right hand is on the back side of the Lord. The prabha, the image of the Lord with Lakshmi and peetham are sculptured on a single slab of stone, which is 2 1/2' x 1 1/2'. The image of the Lord is installed in the middle of the sanctum. He faces the east.

To the left of Lakshmi, there is a stone image of Vēṅka-tēśwara Swāmy. To his back side, near that image is a black stone idol of Nammālvār, facing east. Madhura Kavi Alvar, Tiruppan Ālvār and Periālvār face the south. To the right of the Lord, is a black stone image of Rāmānuja. On his right side are Tirumāḷisai Ālvār and Tonḍaradippoḍi Ālvārs. By them are Kulaśekara and Tirumangai Ālvārs. All these Alvars face the north.

There are eight pillars in the garbhagriha, on which the cement roof was built. The area of the garbha griha is 12 x 18 feet. It has an iron gate to the east. The room before the garbhagriha, is a vacant room with an area 3 1/2 x 18 feet, which has also an iron gate as the entrance to the east. The utsava idols of copper are installed in a temple, in the village. The mukha mantapa of the temple was constructed in the year 1976, as it was written on the western wall of the mantapa. It is 12 x 18 feet. There is a well to the east of the temple. There are two choultries to the north of the temple.

Here pancharatra Agama is followed. The priests are Satani Śrīvaishṇavas. Abhishēkam to the Lord is performed on Friday, Saturday and on Monday, every week. Every day the priest offers "white rice" to the Lord as "naivēdya."

On the evening of Ugadi, the first day of the Telugu new year (April), "Panchāṅga Śravaṇam" (hearing of Almanac) is done in the temple of utsava idols in the village. On the same day, carts decorated with bullocks, go round the temple, in the forest.

The Adhyayana utsavam and the annual festival of the Lord are celebrated for a period of five days from Vaiśākha Suddha Ekādaśi to purnīma (May). The programme of the festival is as follows.

1. Toḷakkam — Ekādaśi.
2. Study of Drāviḍa prabhaṇḍas — Dwādaśi.
3. Paramapada Utsavam — Trayōdaśi.
4. Nrisimha Jayanti — Chaturdasi.
5. Kalyāṇam of the Lord — Purnīma.

Nearly five hundred devotees, local and from the near by villages, congregate on the day of Kalyāṇam. There is heavy rush to the temple during the months of Chaitra (April), Vaiśākha (May), Śrāvaṇa (August), Māgha (February) and phālguna (March). During this period, every day nearly more than fifty people visit the temple with their families. Except on Sunday and Tuesday, on other week days, the number of visitors to the temple exceed thirty and above during the remaining seven months. The temple remains open from 10.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. for the darśan of the Lord every day.

The pujāri marks black "Tilakam" of the "Nanda deepam" on the forehead of the visitors. The peculiar feature of the temple is that the temple remains closed, after 6.00 P.M. every day. The priest opens the doors of the temple next day at 9.00 A.M. As the temple is in the thick forest, even today, nobody dares to stay there during the night.

The influence of the Lord is immensely felt on the devotees, who have complete confidence in him. Some persons have the name of the place of the Lord as Chukkaiah and Chukkamma for male and female persons respectively and people from other districts also visit this temple.¹⁸¹

MADNUR TALUK

1. Madnur

Madnur, the taluk head quarters of the same name, is situated about 26 KMS from the Bōdhan Railway Station and 48 KMS from Nizāmābād. There is a temple of Lakṣmī Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for a day in the month of Vaisākam (May). The local Hindus participate.

BODHAN TALUK

1. Kopperga

Kopperga is situated at a distance of about 13 KMS from Bōdhan, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for one day in the month of Āśvīyujam (October). About 500 local Hindus congregate.

2. Janakampet

Jānakampēṭ is a Railway Station on the Kāchīguda-Manmāḍ metre gauge of the South Central Railway. The village is at a distance of 13 KMS from Nizāmābād.

Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple is to the north of the village at a distance of two kilometres on a hillock. There is a beautiful "kōṇṇu"

with plenty of water, to the South of the temple. There is a small Śiva temple to the west of the temple on the hillock.

Simhadwara is to the north of the temple. There is a small Hanumān temple at the foot of the hillock,

The garbhagriha is 7 1/2 square feet in area. The inside roof is star shaped with stones. The black stone image of Yōgānanda Narasimha Swāmy, 3 feet high, is on a pedestal. The importance of the Lord is that a 'Sālagrāma' is in his navel, to which every day 'abhishēkam' is performed. The Lord is in sitting posture with crossed-legs. He stretches his hands and supports on his knees. He holds 'chakra' in his upper right hand and 'śankha' in his left hand. He keeps his mouth open widely. He wears a 'makuta' on his head. He has silver 'kōra meesalu'. eyes and "three nāmās", The Lord is carved on a black stone with a Prabha around him. There is also a brass Prabha around the image of the Lord. To the left of the Lord, there is a separate black stone image of Lakshmi with a prabha. She holds a lotus-bud in her right hand and her left hand is hanging down. She wears a makuta on her head. She has two silver eyes. The height of the goddess is 1 1/2'. The is a brass prabha also over the image of goddess. To the right side of the Lord, on the same pedestal, the black stone image of Perīālvār, one foot high, is installed in a sitting posture.

Infront of the Lord, at a lower level, there are three copper utsava idols of the Lord. The Lord has mane like a lion. To his left, the image of Lakshmi is installed. To his right, Chakra Perumāndlu. There is an antarala in front of the garbha grihā of the Lord. It is 7 1/2 square feet in area,

The mukha mantapa consists of 16 pillars. The area of the mantapa is 22 1/2 x 19 1/2 feet. At the entrance of the mukha mantapa, there are two figures of an elephant and a lion, carved on the front two pillars. There two figures can be seen

on the two pillars, which face the east, to the right of the Kalyāṇa mantapa after crossing the Simhadwāra. The kalyāṇa mantapa is to the north of the mukha mantapa of the Lord, consisting of twenty pillars. It is 24 x 34 1/2 feet, with considerable height.

The entrance to the temple is to the north. On the horizontal stone pillar, above the simhadwara, the motif of Gajalakshmi in sitting posture, with two standing elephants on either side, raising their trunks upwards, are sculptured. There is a Ratha-Śāla to the right side of the Simhadwāra.

Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here. The priest is a Śrīvaiṣṇava. Every day "abhishēkam" is done to the "sālagrāma" of the Lord and on every Saturday to the Lord, Adhyayanōtsavam is celebrated for three days preceding the annual festival of the Lord. The annual festival is celebrated for six days. The utsavam is from Māgha Śuddha Ashtami to Bahuja Pādyami (February).

The programme is as follows :

1. Beginning of Adhyayanōtsavam - Ashtami.
2. Recitation of Tamil Divya Prabandhas - Navami.
3. Paramapada Utsavam - Daśami,
4. Ankurarpanam - Ekādaśi.
5. Dhvajārōhaṇam - Dwādaśi.
6. Tiru Kalyāṇum - Trayōdaśi.
7. Dōpu utsavam - Chaturdaśi,
8. Rathōtsavam, (car-festival) - Pournima.
9. Chakra teertham - Pādyami.

On the eve of the car festival on pournima, about two thousand peoples from local and neighbouring villages, congregate. A fair is also held in this connection.

Nrisimha Jayanti, Vijayadaśami and other festivals are celebrated in the temple. On the day of Vijaya Daśami, the Lord goes out of the temple on a vehicle in procession for “Śamī puja”,

There is a temple committee with six members to look after the temple. The main source of the income to the temple is from the liberal contributions of the devotees. Every day a few people visit the temple. But on Saturdays nearly 10–20 people visit the Lord. Local and neighbouring people, a few, celebrate tonsure ceremony (kēśa khandana) and marriage of their sons and daughters at this temple. This temple is very popular in the surrounding villages. The pilgrims from the Surrounding villages visit the temple throughout the year, though their number is less than ten and more than six every day.

RANGAREDDY DISTRICT RAJENDRANAGAR TALUK

1. Samshabad

Samshābād is a Railway Station, known as umdanagar on the Secunderabad–Kurnool line of the South Central Railway.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

The temple, which is one kilometre from the Railway Station, is in the village. There is no archaeological or historical evidence relating to the temple. Some information relating to the tradition has been gathered from interviewing the local people and in particular from the priest of the temple. It is said ¹⁸² that the temple was constructed 100 year ago. In olden days it was a “Muṭṭ” known as “Kṛishṇā bāi Muṭṭ”.

The temple consists of a sanctum and mukha mantapa. Above the door of the garbha griha, the figure of Gaja

Lakshmi is carved on a stone with two elephants raising their trunks. on their side of the door of the sanctum, two figures of the head of a lion with mouths open are sculptured.

In the sanctum, on a raised plat form, attached to the back wall, the copper idol of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy is installed. The Lord, seated on a pedestal, has four hands. He holds 'chakra' in his upper right hand and Śankha in his left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture, and his left hand is at the back of Lakshmi. His right leg is hanging down. He bends his left leg at the knee with foot touching his right thigh. Lakshmi is seated on his left thigh hanging down her leg. She holds a lotus a lotus-bud in her left hand and keeps her right hand on the back of the Lord. The Lord keeps his mouth open. He wears a makuta and hārās. The image of the Lord is 1' in height and that of his consort 6"

Madhwa tradition is followed here. The priest is a Madhwa. Shōḷāśa upachāras are performed to the Lord. The annual festival takes place on Nrisimha Jayanti day, when the deity is taken out of the temple in a procession on a vehicle. About 100 local people, congregate. Śrī Krishna Jayanti and Vināyaka navarātras āre celebrated for nine days.

The temple committee looks after the maintenance of the temple, collecting donations from the local people. Every day about 10 persons visit the temple.

2. Moosapet.

Moosāpēt is situated at a distance of seven kilometres from Hyderabad. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy here.

IBRAHIMPATNAM TALUK

1. Ibrahimpatnam.

Ibrāhīmpatnam is the taluk head quarters of the same

name. It is situated at a distance of 32 kilometres from Hyderabad city. There are two temples here, one in the village and the other on the hillock, near the village.

There is a temple on the hillock dedicated to Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy. The other temple is in the village, where the utsava idols of the Lord are installed. This temple consists of a sanctum and mukha mantapa only.

Some information relating to the tradition has been gathered from interviewing the local people and in particular from the priest of the temple. It is related that when Ibrāhīm Qutb Shāh heard that the artificial tank, the Hussain sagar, was not popularly known after his name, he was touched to the quick and constructed the tank and the town of Ibrahim-patnam.¹⁸⁸ Ibrahim ruled from 1550-1580 AD.

Besides the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple on the hillock, there are two other temples, one is of 'Śiva' and the other of the 'Ālvārs'. At the foot of the hillock, there is a "kōnēru."

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple.

The temple consisting of a sanctum, 'antarala' and the mukha mantapa, faces the east. It is believed that here Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy revealed Himself on a rock, which forms the back of the sanctum. The roof and the walls are built in such a way that the rock, where the Lord had manifested, became the back wall of the sanctum. The sanctum is 4 1/2 square feet and the 'antaraḷa' is 3' x 6'. The mukha mantapa, consisting of eight stone pillars is 6' x 12'.

The sculpture of the Lord on the rock is 2 1/2' high. Nrisimha is seated with the right leg hanging down. The left is folded with the foot resting at the right knee. On the left

thigh of the Lord, Lakshmi wearing a makuta and 'hāra' is seated hanging her legs down. The Lord has four hands. In his upper right hand is chakra and in the left is śankha. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya posture' and the lower left hand, which is not visible, is presumably taken behind the waist of Lakshmi. The god has a fierce looking face with eyes and cheeks puffed up. He wears a makuta and a 'hāra.' His mouth, nose and a little mane are clearly visible. He has three "Nāmās" on his fore-head. Lakshmi is seated on his left lap hanging her legs down. She is 1 1/2' in height. She also wears a makuṭa and a 'hāra.' She kept her left hand on the left knee of Lord Narasimha.

In the worship of the Lord, Smārta tradition is followed here. The priest is a Smārta brahmin. The same priest is in charge of worship at the temple on the hillock and the temple in the village. The annual festival of the Lord, that is Brahmōtsavam, is celebrated for five days from Vaiśāka śuddha Ekādaśī to Purnima (May). It takes place at the temple of the Lord on the hillock only. The utsava idols of the Lord are brought from the village temple to the hillock on Vaiśāka śuddha Ekādaśī and they are brought back to the village temple on Vaiśāka purnima by evening. The programme of Brahmōtsava is as follows :

1. The utsava idols are brought from the village temple to the hillock — Ekādaśī.
2. Ankurārpaṇa and Dhvjarōhaṇam in the morning — Dwādaśī.
3. Hōmam and Baliharana in the morning — Trayōdaśī. Kalyaṇōtsavam in the Evening — Garuḍa Sēva in the night.
4. Chakra vari and pushpayāgam in the morning — Chaturdaśī. Rathōtsavam (car-festival) in the night.

5. Nāgavalli in the morning — Purnima.

In the evening, the utsava idols are brought back to the village temple.

Nrisimha Jayanti (May-June) and Dasara are celebrated on the hillock, at this temple. The following festivals are celebrated in the village temple.

- a) Ugādi (April).
- b) Śri Kṛishṇa Jayanti (August).
- c) Vināyaka Navarātrulu (September).
- d) Dasara (October).
- e) Kārtika māsam (November-December).

The temple is illuminated with rows of lamps during the month of kārtikam (November) and 'bhajana' is done in the night.

- f) Dhanurmāsam (December-January).

A special worship to the Lord early in the morning, offering 'pengali' is performed for the whole month.

The temple has 4 1/2 acres of wet land. From the income of the land, the temple is run by the temple committee. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from the donations from the local people. About 300 local people congregate on the day of kalyāṇotsavam of the Lord. Every Friday, nearly 20 women visit the temple and on Saturdays, about 30 people visit the temple on the hillock. Every day, nearly ten devotees visit the temple. The people visit the temple of Nara-simha on the hillock to fulfil their vows to the Lord. Every day nearly 20 people visit the temple of the Lord in the village. On Saturdays, at night, about 30 people visit the temple and they do 'bhajana' in the mantapa of the temple.

MAHESHWARAM TALUK

1. Raviryāl

Raviryāl is situated at a distance of 19 Kms. from Hyderābād. The temple of Narasimha Swāmy is on the hillock, which is three furlongs from the village. There is a black stone image of the Lord, which is 2' in height. The pūjāri is a brahmin. The Brahmōtsavam of the Lord is celebrated for eleven days from Vaiśākha śuddha śaṣṭi to Bahuḷa pād̐yami (May). The car-festival (Rathōtsavam) attract people from nearby villages. About 5000 people (of all Hindu communities) congregate.

2. Kongrakalam

Kongrakalam is situated at a distance of 32 Kms from Hyderābād. There is a temple, dedicated to Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The pūjāri is a brahmin. The annual festival takes place for five days from Vaiśākha śuddha chatur-dāśi to Bahuḷa Tādiya (May). About 4500 devotees, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate.

WARANGAL DISTRICT WARANGAL TALUK

1. Urugonda

The village is situated at a distance 19 Kms from the Warangal Railway Station and two furlongs from the road of Warangal-Mulug bus route. The temple of Lord Narasimha Swamy at the foot of the small hillock, is situated at a distance of one kilometre from the village. There is also a temple in the village for the utsava idols of the Lord,

The temple of Lord Narasimha Swamy on the hillock.

On the lower part of the hillock, there is a big rock facing the ground, which is like the roof of the sanctum. It is a cave. To the east in the sanctum, below the roof-rock, there is another rock, on which Narasimha Swamy is sculptured, who is 2 feet high. The people believe that Lord Narasimha Swamy manifested on the rock, facing southeast. The Lord has four hands. He holds disc and conch in his upper hands. He stretched his lower right hand and supported on his right knee and his left hand is invisible. He sits in Padmasana posture.

Infront of the Lord, at a distance of 4 1/2 feet, there is a rock on which Sita, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa are sculptured. To the opposite side of the sanctum of the Lord, at a distance of 30 feet, there is a ruined temple. On the two rocks in the mukha mntapa of this ruined temple, Pōygai, Pudattār and Pēy Āḷwars are sculptured, who face the South and the nine Āḷvārs are sculptured on another rock. All the Āḷvārs are in sitting posture with folded hands. Probably the ruined temple is of Rāmānuja, as there is a room, which is now vacant.

The temple of Narasimha Swamy in the village

The Sanctum of the temple was constructed 60-70 years back.¹⁸⁴ The mukha mantapa, infront of the Sanctum, was constructed in 1962 by Gampa kēdarī, a resident of the village, as was written there.

On the back wall of the sanctum there are many caste marks of the Vaishnavas. These 'Nāmās' are taken to be the form of Lord Narasimha Swamy by the people. The Sanctum is of 6 x 7 1/2 feet. Before the wall, a black stone image of Rāmānuja is installed on a 'Peetham'. Below this image, the

copper idols of Vēnu Gōpala Swāmi and His two consorts are there. The copper idols of Chakrabēra, uḍayavarula, Nam-mālvār, Āṇḍāl and Kannan are also there.

The Priests are Śrīvaishṇavas. The worship to the Lord is done in accordance with pāṇchrātra Āgama by the priests of the temple. Abhishēkam is performed to the "Sālagrāmas" every day. On special occasions like the festivals, and the annual festival of the Lord, abhiṣēkam is performed to Lord Narasimha Swamy.

Śrī Narasimha Swāmy annual festival is celebrated in 'Dhanurmāsam' from 7th January to 22nd January. Adhyayanōtsavam for the first three days and marriage ceremony of the Lord for thirteen days are celebrated here.

The Programme of the annual festival is as follows :

1. Adhyayana utsavam - Toḷakkam. January - 7
2. Adhyayana utsavam - Sēvākālam. January - 8
3. Adhyayana utsavam-Paramapada Utsavam January-9
4. Marriage Ceremony - Ankurārpana - January - 10
5. Marriage of the Lord - January 11
6. Hōmam & Baliharanam - January 12
7. Sadasyam - January 13
8. Pūrṇahuti - Morning - January 14
Evening-The Lord goes to the hillock.
9. Jātara - January 15
10. Evening - The Lord returns to the village temple -
January 16
11. Grāmasēva - January 17
12. Nāgavalli - January 18

13. Durgampēṭa Sēva	-	January 19
14. Mahad Āṣṛvachanam	-	January 20
15. Grama Sēvalu	-	January 21
16. Grama Sēvalu	-	January 22

The special function of the annual celebration of the Lord is on Sankrānti day. On this day, the Lord goes out to the hillock and the village go round thē 'Dhwaja Stamba' with their decorated bullock-carts. The next day is Jatara (fair). Nearly five hundred local people congregate there.

The temple is run by the priests, who enjoy some lands attached to the temple. There are four priests, who participate in the conduct of worship to the Lord, in turn. The patrons of the annual festival are the villagers. Nearly five people visit the temple of the Lord in the village daily and on Saturdays nearly ten people visit the temple.

2. Kommala.

The village is situated at a distance of 26 KMS from Warangal. The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is on a small hillock at a distance of one Km from the village.

There is no archaeological evidence relating to the temple. There is a traditional legend, which is current among the local people. The legend says¹⁸⁵ that "The Pandavas performed penance on a hill, known as 'pāṇḍavula guṭṭa', which is near this hillock. This hillock is known as 'Pāṇḍavula Bōḍu', where the Lord manifested Himself on a rock. The Pāṇḍavās used to worship Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on this hillock." There is a story regarding the manifestation of the Lord, which is widely spread among the local and the neighbouring villagers.¹⁸⁶ "One day in the distant past, the Lord cut the crop of maize in eight acres of land and came there. As a mark of this event, Dupa buddi (a vessel), choppa kaṭṭa (bundle of dried maize plants) and Kodavali (a

sickle) are sculptured on the rock, to the east, below the temple, which is at the foot of the hill, near a tamarind tree particularly, the villagers have reverence for the rock bearing the above marks."

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy is on the hillock. There are forty seven stairs to approach the temple. The main entrance facing the north was constructed in 1977, as it was writted there. Above the Simhadwāra, the image of Narasimha Swāmy was constructed. There are seventeen pillars on which the mukha mantapa is built up with stones and it is 25 1/2 x 12 feet. There is no sculpture on the pillers. There are two temples in the mukha mantapa. They are the temples of uḍayavarulu and Lakshmi, which face the north and east respectively.

There are "Kōnēru" and Kalyāṇa maṇṭapa with four pillars to the north of the temple.

The inner sanctum is a cave formed by two rocks in a triangular shape from west to east. The Lord had manifested Himself, the devotees believe, on a rock which faces the south-east. The sculpture is one inche in height and on his either side are sculptured Lakshmi (Bhudēvi), and Neeḷādēvi.

The black stone image of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is installed in the corner to the west of the sanctum on a 'stone pedestal.' The stone image of the Lord is 3' high with awe in spring looks. The Lord is seated with his two legs resting on a 'peetham.' Lakshmi is seated on his left lap, who is one foot in height. The Lord has open mouth and four hands. He holds disc and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya' posture and his left hand is on the stomach of his consort, Lakshmi. The Lord face the east. The cave is 9 x 4 1/2' feet. In front of the image of the Lord, the utsava idols, made of copper, are

installed. They are of Bhudēvi, Narasimha Swāmy and Neeja dēvi. To the left of the e idols, there is a black stone image of Andāl. The idol of "chakra pernmāṇḍlu" is of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy along with Lakshmi. To the left, is a black stone image of Krishṇa.

Before the door of the 'antarala' on a rock, there is a pair of foot-prints of the Lord, sculptured. The devotees wash these feet, which are on the "pādāla kaḍapa."

To the left of sanctum of the Lord, there is a sannidhi of Chenchu Lakshmi. The inner area is one square. The stone image is 4 1/2' high. Around it, is a stone prabha, sculptured together with the image of Lakshmi. She has four hands. She holds a lotus in her upper hands. She keeps her lower right hand on her stomach and her left is in 'abhaya' mudra. The temple faces the east. As the nose of Lakshmi is slightly broken, it has become unfit for worship.

The priests are Śrīvaishṇavas. The worship is done here according to the Pāncharātra Āgama. Daily 'abhishēkam' is performed to the Sālagrāmas and during the festivals, abhi-shēkam is done to the Mulaswāmi. The general festivals and the "Dhanur Māsam" are observed. Śrī Narasimha Jayanti (birth day of the Lord) is performed on Vaiśākha Śuddha Trayodaśi (May). The Adhyayana utsavam and the Brahmō-tsavam of the Lord are celebrated for a fort night from phalguṇa śuddha saptami to Bahuḷa Saptami (March). The programme is given below :

1. Tiruvanjanam at 10-00 A. M. Adhyayanōtsavam 8-00 P. M. Saptami.
2. Adhyayanōtsavam - Aṣṭami.
3. Paramapada Utsavam - Navami.
4. Aukurārpaṇa and Hōmam - Daśami.
5. Dhvajārōhaṇa & Bali puja, Kalyāṇōtsavam. 12-00 P. M. - Ekādaśi.

6. Nitya Hōmam – Dwādaśi.
7. Pāruvēṭa, bull & Horse vehicle – Trayōdaśi.
8. Sadasyam – Chaturdaśi
9. Decorated bullock carts & their procession and purnahuti – Purnima.
10. Decorated Bullock carts & their procession - Bhuḷa pāḍyami.
11. Decorated Bullock carts & their procession – Vidiya.
12. Sēvas on payment by the devotees – Tadiya.
13. Sēvas on payment by the the devotees – Chaviti.
14. Car-festival – Panchāmi.
15. Śrī pushpayāgam – Shaṣṭi.
16. Śataghaṭa Abhiśēkam & pavalimpōtsavam – Saptami.

On Phālguṇa pūrṇima, a procession of decorated carts is the eye-feast to the visitors. The decorated “Hanuma vāhanā”, “Elephant vehicle”, chakram bandḷu, prabha bandḷu, and other carts go in a procession. On the days of pūrṇima and bahuḷa panchami and of the car-festival, about seventy five thousand devotees, local and from other districts congregate. A fair is held in connection with the festival for sixteen days.

The temple is run by the temple committee. The main source of the income to the temple is the liberal contributions from the devotees. On Saturday and Monday ten to fifteen people visit the temple throughout the year. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), Particularly on Saturdays and Mondays, there is a rush of the visitors. Nearly fifty people visit the temple on these days. From Māgham (February) to Vaiśāka (May) the people along with their families visit the Lord. During the month of Śrāvaṇa, people come for picnic and visit the Lord,

The devotees wash the "pādāla kaṣāpa" with water and offer a pumpkin, a cocoanut and some quantity of rice and cash in fulfilment of their vows to the Lord. The people come for sleep at the temple. They give the name of the place of the Lord to their sons and daughters as Kommālu, Kommālaiah and Kommāamma respectively.

3. Geesugonda

Geesugonda is situated at a distance of 19 Kms from Warangal and two kilometers from the road of Hanamkonda-Narsampēt. The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy on the hill is to the west of the village, at a distance of one kilometre. The utsavaidols of the Lord are installed in a temple in the village.

The Lord is on the hill. There is a "Kōnēru" on the hill. There are three hundred and twelve steps to approach the temple. It is believed that Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy manifested Himself on a big rock on the hill. It is stated ¹⁸⁷ that it was the belief of the people that the Lord was in the rock and manifested his small form. The head and the eyes of the Lord are visible on the rock. Beside him, the head and the eyes of Lakshmi are visible. Both wear three "Nāmās" of the vaishnavas. They are 1 1/2' and 1' in height respectively and they face the south.

The sanctum is a cave formed by the rocks. It has no doors. It is 4 1/2 x 7 1/2 feet. Before the garbha griha, there is mukha mantapa of the Lord with sixteen pillars and the area of the mantapa is 10 x 10 feet. The roof of the mantapa was constructed with stones. There is no sculpture on the pillars of the mantapa.

Vaikhānasa Āgama is being followed here. Every day worship is done and 'naivēdya' is offered to the Lord.

Apart from the Hindu festivals, the Vardhanti (death anniversary) of Vighanasāchārya is performed on Śrāvaṇa pūrṇima (August). The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated on the hill for a period of five days from pushya śuddha Ekādaśī to Pūrṇima (January). The utsava idols of the Lord are brought from the temple of the village to the temple on the hill. The temple is run by a hereditary priest. During the Brahmōtsavam (annual festival of the Lord) for five days, about two thousand local devotees congregate. They visit the Lord during the months of Chaitram (April), Śrāvaṇam (August), Pushyam (January) and Māgham (February). During these months, everyday about 10 to 15 people visit the lord on the hill.

4. Velupukonda (Zafargadh).

Vēlupukoṇḍa is situated at a distance of 13 Kms from Varadannapēt on the Warangal - Khammam bus route and twenty four miles from Warangal. Probably it is the highest hill temple, known in Telāṅgāṇa. The village is between two hills. To the back of the village, there is a hill on which in a cave Lord Yōgānanda Lakshmī Naraṣimha Swāmy manifested. The temple of the Lord is in the fort on the hill. This hill is known as Vēlpukoṇḍa (Vēlpu-Lord; Koṇḍa-hill). This place is also known as Zafargadh.

There is an archaeological evidence of the existence of a ruined fort on the hill. The remnants of the walls of the fort are still there. Certain Śankaragaṇḍa of the Rāshtra Kūṭa lineage of Chiefs is said to have constructed the tank on the hill of Yelupugonda.¹⁸⁸ In accordance with the inscription of Miriyāla Kāmasāni, which is dated as 1000 A.D., Vēlupukoṇḍa was once the capital of the Kākatīyas.¹⁸⁹ During the reign of Nawab Nizam Alikhan of the Deccan, Zafaruddaula was the Tahasildār of Khammam area in 1767 AD. After his

death in 1768 A.D., Zafaruddaula II was the Tahsildar who was known as 'Zafaruddaula Dhwasmi. There is a village near Khammam by name "Dhwamsalā puram" which is named after him.¹⁹⁰

There is a local tradition and a legend relating to the temple.¹⁹¹ The legend says that "this was the hermitage of sage Āgastya, who did penance to know the importance of Drāvīda language, before his 'iṣṭadēvata' (chosen God) Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy".

Many years passed after this. "In distant past Zafaruddaula was the ruler of this place, who constructed an impregnable bastille for defence. It goes by his name as Zafargadh' (gadh means fort). After Zafaruddaula, Dhansa came to power, who had great devotion for Lord Narasimha Swamy."

There is a 'Kōnēru' on the hill to the South-east of the temple. This is the Aanch Narasimha Kshētra. They are :

- a) Konkane golla Narasimha Swāmy to the north of the hill.
- b) Kōṇḍa Singaraiah on the hill.
- c) Gaṇṭalagaḍi Narasimha Swāmy to the west of the hill.
- d) Suprasanna Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy to the north - west of the hill and
- e) Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy on the hill.

There is a 'Ranga Nāyaka' temple to the west on the hill.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy on the hill.

The sanctum of the Lord is a cave, which is formed by a big rock. The Lord is sculptured on a rock which is in the

back wall of the sanctum. The rock is $4\frac{1}{2}$ square feet in area. The sculpture of the Lord on the rock is $2\frac{1}{2}$ ' in height and its breadth is $1\frac{1}{2}$ '. The Lord has four hands. He holds disc in his upper right hand and conch in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in abhaya posture and his left hand, going around the waist of Lakshmi, is in varada posture. The Lord has a 'makuta' on his head, which is in pointed shape. He stretched his long ears and has open mouth. He has hārās in his neck. Lakshmi is seated on his left lap. He is in Padmasana posture. The Lord is called yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy.

It is believed that Lord Narasimha manifested on a big rock, which is the roof of the sanctum. The Lord faces the ground. It is at a distance of 3 feet from the Mulaswāmy, sculptured on the rock of the back wall of the sanctum. The mouth of the Lord alone is visible. Above the mouth, there are three silver 'Nāmās'. He has also silver eyes and silver moustache.

On a rock in the sanctum, at a height of $2\frac{1}{2}$ ' from the ground level, the twelve Ālvārs are sculptured, who are $2\frac{1}{2}$ ' in height. They face the east. Ānjanēya is sculptured on a rock, who faces the north, towards the Lord. On either side of the door of the sanctum, two Dwārapālakas with conch and disc are seen.

The utsav idols of the Lord are in a temple in the village, constructed in the year 1971.¹⁹² The mukha mantapa of the Lord was constructed in 1964 as it was written there with an area of 24 x 24 feet. It has sixteen pillars, over which the roof was built, which is ordinary. To the right side of mukha mantapa, there is Ramānuja Kuṭam (kitchen of the Lord).

The Priests are Śrivaishṇavas. Abhishēkam is performed to the Lord every day. The Pāncharātra Āgama is being

followed here. Cooked rice with curd and tamarind juice are offered to the Lord as *naivēdya*.

Narasimha Jayanti, the birth day of Lord Narasimha, is performed on the hill on *Vaiśākha śuddha Chaturdaśi* (May). *Adhyayanōtsavam* and the annual festival of the Lord are celebrated in the village of utsava idols of the Lord. General Hindu festivals are followed here.

The temple committee looks after the temple. There are eight priests, who have nominal lands to worship the Lord. The main source of income is from the devotees, local and from surrounding villages.

Daily 15 people, local and from the neighbouring village, after taking bath in the 'pushkaraṇi', visit the temple. The number of people during the month of *Śrāvaṇa*, visiting the temple exceeds fifty. About 3,000 people, local and from surroundings villages congregate, on the occasion of the annual festival. The devotees offer silver moustache, wooden sundals (*pākḍiḷu*), silver umbrella, 'nāmās' and a cocoanut to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. The people for tonsure ceremony to their sons and also for the celebration of the marriages of their sons or daughters. Many devotees particularly, issules and sick, local and from neighbouring villages visit the Lord on the hill for fulfilment for their desires.¹⁹⁸

5. Chilupur

Chilupur is situated at a distance of 29 KMS from Hanamkonda. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for three days in the month of *phālguna* (March). About 3,000 Hindus, local and from the nearby villages, congregate.

6. Varadannapet

The village is situated at a distance of 27 kms from Warangal on the Warangal-Khammam bus route. There are two temples of Narasimha here. At a distance of 3 Kms to the west, from the village, there is a boulder on which the mouth of the Lord is visible. The people here, believe that Lord Narasimha Swamy manifested Himself on the boulder. The boulder is 2 1/2 in height. It has three caste marks on it. The temple is built over the boulder of the lord and has an enclosure. There are ten black stone images of the Āḷvārs on either side of the lord on the rock.

Lord Narasimha Swamy on the boulder is known as 'Pāṭi banda Narasimha Swamy, On Saturdays 10 to 15 people visit this temple. There is a stone pillar to the north of the temple to which the devotees tie the bulls in fulfilment of their vows to Lord Narasimha.

Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in the village.

The temple is in the village. There is a stream by name Ākhēru a tributary of Godavari, flowing to the north of the temple. The presiding deity is Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, which is 2 1/2 in height. The Lord has four hands. He holds disc in his upper right hand and conch in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in "abhaya posture" and his left hand is on the waist of Lakshmi. The Lord is seated with his right leg resting on a peetham, On his left lap, Lakshmi is seated. Lakshmi is 1 1/2' high. Both the Lord and his consort wear makutas on their heads. The eyes of the Lord are awe-inspiring.

In front of Lord Lakshmi Narasimhaswāmy, there are copper utsava idols of Sīta, Rāma and Lakshmana. Below the

utsava idols, there are stone images of Tirumāṅgai Ālvār, Nammālvār and Udayavarulu. To the right of Udayavarulu, there are idols of Chakra bēra and three Ālvārs, who face the south in the Sanctum, which is $7\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ feet. On the stone pillar laid horizontally over the door of the garbhagriha, Gaja Lakshmi, with two elephants on either side raising their trunks over her head, is sculptured. The Lord faces the east.

There are sixteen pillars on which the mukha mantapa is built up. The area of the mantapa is 15×15 feet. To the left of the sanctum, there is the sannidhi of Āṇḍāl. Āṇḍāl is of black stone. The udayavarula Sannidhi is to the right of the sanctum.

The priests are Srivaishnavas. There are four hereditary priests to worship the Lord in turns. Pāncharātra Āgama is being followed here. The general Hindu festivals are performed here. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for five days from Chaitra Śuddha Navami to Trayodasī (April). The Priests are hereditary. They have some lands to worship the Lord and they perform rituals and festivals to the Lord in turn.

The special function of the annual festival is the car-festival, which is celebrated on Chaitra Śuddha Trayodaśī (April). About 2,000 devotees, local and from the surrounding villages congregate. Daily 10 people visit the temple.

7. Hanamkonda

Hanamkonda is situated at a distance of 150 Kilometres from Hyderabad. There is a temple of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy here on a hill, five kilometres from the Warangal Railway Station.

There is an undated inscription on a pavement slab in

Rāma Mandir, at Hanamkoṇḍa, which is in Telugu language.¹⁹⁴ It records the consecration (Pratiṣṭha) of Narasimha by Śrīdhara yōgi in Anumakoṇḍa city, in A 2, Asvayuja, 'Su. 5, Thursday. Some information has been gathered from interviewing the priest and the local persons.

The sanctum is a cave under a big rock, which forms the roof of the sanctum. Lord Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy is sculptured on a rock on the western wall of the sanctum. The sanctum is 21 x 10 1 2 feet. There is a kōṇēru to the north-east in the sanctum. It is believed that Lord Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy manifested on the rock of the hill. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand and Śankha in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in "abhaya hasta" and his lower left hand is on the waist of Lakshmi, who is seated on his left lap. The Lord wears a makutam and has open mouth. The sculpture of the Lord on the rock is 1 1 2 in height. The Lord is in sitting posture. He faces the east. To the left of the lord, on a stone in the north wall of the sanctum, Uḷayavarulu and Nammālṽar are sculptured facing the south.

The mukha mantapa has sixteen stone pillars, on which the roof is built up with stones. It is 18 x 18 feet. There is an image of Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy along with Lakshmi on his left lap, constructed inside on the western wall of the mukha mantapa. To the east of the temple, there are 12 stone pillars on which the roof is built up with stones. Probably it is Kalyāṇa maṇṭapa of the Lord, which is 7 1/2 x 21 feet. The door of the temple faces the east, Infront of the door, at some distance, there are two foot prints of the Lord.

The Priests are Śrivaishṇavas. Here Pāṇcharatra Āgama is followed. On every Saturday, and on demand by the devotees on any day, the priest of the temple performs abhishēkam to the Lord and worships him, Adhyayana utsavam and the

annual festival of the Lord are celebrated on Mārgasheersha Śuddha Ekādaśi (December), which is known as Vaikunṭha or Mukkōṣi Ekādaśi, by the priests of the temple only. There are three hereditary priests, running the temple.

General local devotees arrange "naivēdya" to the Lord on Saturdays and visit the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. On Saturdays, during the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), nearly 30 people visit the temple and on other Saturdays, about 15 people visit.

PARKAL TALUK

Kodavatancha.

Koḍavatancha is situated at a distance of 13 Kms from Parkāl, the taluk head quarters. The temple is on the outskirts of the village. There are no archaeological or historical evidences relating to the temple. Information has been gathered from interviewing the priests in particular and the local persons, in general. There is a local tradition, which is popular among the villagers around.¹⁹⁵

The tradition is that "about a thousand and five hundred years ago, where the village now stands, there was a thick forest. There the hill tribes lived and were exposed to various diseases and wild animals. There was a mendicant Śrī Vaiṣṇava, who was a devotee of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy. Chenchu Lakshmi, the goddess of the forest tribes, appeared in his dream and told him of the existence of the Lord in the forest. He saw a path in the forest and followed it. There he found the stone image of the Lord. He cleared the forest around with sickles and axes and installed the Lord there. Later on, a temple was constructed."

There is a traditional legend about Chenchu Lakshmi.¹⁹⁶ It says that "Chenchu Lakshmi, is an incarnation of Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu. When Hiranya Kaśipu was killed by the Lord, his wrath could be controllad only by Lakshmi. Therefore she took birth in a chenchu family and married Lord Narasimha Swamy, who was wandering in the forest and appeased His wrath. When the tribes realised that the child of their family was none other than Lakshmi Herself, they adopted Her as the tribal goddess. This Lakshmi is known as Chenchu Lakshmi."

It is stated¹⁹⁷ that as the people worked with the sickles far clearing off the dense forest for the construction of the temple, it came to be regarded as Kodavali Vancha. In course of time, it came to be known as 'Koṇḍavaṭāṇcha' and 'Kōṭāṇcha'.

The Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple faces the east. There is a kōṇēru to the south - east of the temple. There is also a tank near the temple. There are some choultries for the pilgrims here. The area of the mukha mantapa is 19' x 16'

The antarala is 4 1/2 x 7 1/2 feet, built with stones. The inner sanctum is 7 1/2 x 4 1/2 feet.

The presiding deity's is a block stone image. The Lord has a lion's head with mane and human body with awe inspiring looks. He has open mouth and wears a 'makutam'. He is sitting in padāsana on a peetaṁ which is 1 1/2' high. The Lord is 1 1/2' in height. Lakshmi is seated on his left lap. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper right hand is supported on his right knee and his lower left hand is on the waist of Lakshmi, who is 1/2' in height. Behind the image of the Lord, on a lower edge of the back wall of the inner sanctum, black stone images of twelve Āḷvārs are installed, facing the east. To the right side of the Lord, there is

block stone image of Nammālvār and to his left is Uḍayavarulu. Below the poṭham of the Lord, copper utsava idols of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy along with Lakshmi and Āṇḍāl, are installed on a plātfarm.

The Pāncharātra Āgama is followed here. 'Abhiṣēkam' is performed to the Sālagrāmas ever day and to the Lord on every Ekādaśi and on festival days. The prests are Śrivaishnavas, who are trained 'Archakas, holding certificates from Yādagiriguṭṭa.

Daily Programme of the temple

1. Suprabhātam — 6-00 to 6-30 A. M.
2. Dharma Darśanam — 6-30 to 7-00 A. M.
3. Ārārādhana and prābōdhaki — 7 00 to 7-30 A. M.
4. Archanas and distribution of food to the devotees — 7-30 to 8-30 A. M.
5. Śēvas and Dharma Darśanam — 8-30 to 11-00 A. M.
6. Āradhana and food offering to the Lord and distribution to devotees — 11-00 to 12-00 Noon.
7. The door remains closed — 12-00 to 4-00 P. M.
8. Sēvas and Dharmā Darśanam — 4-00 to 6-30 P. M.
9. Ārādhana — 6-30 to 7-00 P. M.
10. Archanas — 7 00 to 7-30 P. M.
11. Dharma Darśanam — 7-30 to 8-30 P. M.
12. Food offering to the Lord and its distribution to the devotees — 8-30 to 9-00 P. M.
13. Ekānta (Pavaḷimpu) sēva 9-00 P. M.
14. The door of the temple is closed — 9-30 P. M.

Nrisimha Jayanti is celebrated on Vaiśaka Śuddha Trayodaśi (May) with Swāti Nakshatram' for two days. On

Trayodaśi, at evening, Tiruvārādhana is performed in the evening and the devotees sing devotional songs. On Chaturdaśi, abhishekam and Archanas are performed. In the evening a 'harikatha' on the birth of Narasimha Swamy is recited and it is enacted by the devotees. Above thousand devotees, local and from the distant places, congregate on this occasion. The other Hindu festivals are also celebrated at this temple. Lakṣmi Narasimha Swāmy's annual festival is celebrated for eleven days from Phālguna śuddha Saptami to Bahuḷa vidiya (March). Adhyayanōtsavam for the first three days and Kalyāṇōtsavam for the next eight days are performed. During these days discourses by eminent people are arranged in the evening.

Programme of the Annual Festival

1. Abhishēkam and Adhyayanōtsavam - Saptami.
2. Adhyayana of Tamil Divya Prabhandas - Aṣṭami,
3. Paramapadōtsavam - Navami-
4. Ankurārpāna - Daśami.
5. Dhvajārōhaṇa and Kalyāṇam - Ekādaśi.
6. Hōmam and Baliharāṇa; Gajavāhana - Dwādaśi.
7. Sadasyam and Garudōtsavam - Trayōdaśi.
8. Car-festival (Rathōtsavam) - Chaturdaśi.
9. Purnahuti and Śakatōtsavam-Pourṇima.
10. Śakatōtsavam and Jātara (Fair) - Bahuḷa pāḍyami.
11. Chakravari and Pushpayāgam-Vidiya,

About six thousand people, local and from other districts, attend the festival. The three hereditary priests under the supervision of the executive officer of Endowments Department of A.P, run the temple. The source of the income to the

temple is from the liberal contribution of the devotees. It is one of the 'B' class temples in the Telangana area,

The pilgrims offer the following types of gifts to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows and they pay money for the procession of the Lord on certain vehicles.

- (a) Bullocks
- (b) procession of the Lord on certain vehicles and
- (c) To tie a cocoanut.

The devotees visit the temple for the **celebration of the following** items.

1. Nāma karaṇam (giving a name to the child)
2. Annaprāśana (giving food to the child)
3. Chevulu kuṭṭuta (tie some thing to the ears)
4. Kēśa khaṇḍana (Tonsure ceremony)
5. Akshara Sweekaram (initiation of education)
6. Upanayana (wearing ceremony of three threads)
7. Marriage and
8. Meditation.

Some devotees, who suffer from chronic diseases or from mental or psychological diseases, visit the temple with a desire to cure their diseases by the grace of God.¹⁹⁸ Every day about 20 people visit the temple and on Saturdays nearly 50 people from local and surrounding villages, visit the temple. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August), there is a heavy rush of the devotees. During that period particularly on Saturdays, nearly 100 people visit the temple.

ETURI NAGARAM TALUK

1. Gangaram

Gangaram is situated at a distance of 21 Kms. from

Eturi Nagaram, head quarters of the taluk.

There is a temple of **Ratnagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy** on a hill at a distance 3 Kms. from the village. There is a rivulet near the hill. The blackstone image of the Lord is in awe - in spiring form.

The annual festival is celebrated according to the convenience of the villagers.

2. Malluru

The village is seven kilometres from **Mangāpēt** on the **Hanamkonda - Mangāpēt** road. The temple of **Ugra Narasimha Swāmy** is situated on a hill at a distance of four kilometres from the village. There is a seven feet high stone image of **Narasimha Swamy** with a lion's head and human body, in an awe-inspiring form carved on a rock cut temple. This is a lovely standing image of **Kevala Narasimha Swamy**.

The main source of information is **Śrī Hēmāchala Lakshmi Nrisimha kshētra Mahātmyam**, a modern Telugu work, by **Ambaṭi Vēkatappaiah**, a retired Telugu Pandit. Further sources are the interviews held with the priest of the temple, local persons and some devotees, who visited the Lord at that time. The local traditional account of the temple, recorded in the book reveals the following story.¹⁹⁹

“At the end of the **Dwāpārayuga**, there was a small village near the hill, by name **Hēmāchala**, where there were some shepherds. **Sītārāma** was one of them. Though he was unschooled and untutored, he was always chanting the name of God, while grazing his cows in the forest. Some times he was in deep thoughts of the Lord, sitting on a rock or under the shade of a tree and forgot every thing. In this way three scores of years passed. He lost his wife and his sons grew up.

So he began to devote all his time to the Lord. One day he saw a drama of Prahlāda. When he came home, he began to recollect his thoughts of the drama and slept. The Lord appeared in his dream and revealed his existence in a cave on the hill and showed him the way to reach the spot. Then he woke up and spent the remaining night by singing the glory of the Lord. After the dawn, he lonely began his search for the cave. At last he recognised it and entered into it with intense and sincere devotion. To his surprise, he saw nine golden thrones there and on eight thrones he witnessed the forms of Parasimha profusely shining. He folded his hands and praised the Lord. When he was unable to raise his pious doubt, the Lord knew it and told him that he had nine forms to look after the welfare of the people in the kaliage and one of His nine forms was in another cave, to the west of this cave and his other forms would be manifested in different places in the country. With these words, the Lord disappeared. Sītārāma made up his mind to settle there and spent the rest of life there by worshipping the Lord."

"Countless years passed on unnoticed after the dawn of Kaliage. Deepakarni was a great king of the Śātavāhanas, Who ruled Southern India with matchless royal power and prestige. He was a great devotee of the Lord and was ruling the kingdom with piety and nobility winning the hearts of the people. One day Lord Narasimha appeared in his dream and revealed. His existence in a cave on the hill and ordained him to remove the entrance rock out of the cave. The king, following by his ministers, dignitaries and soldiers, came to the hill in accordance with the command of the Lord, but he could not recognise the cave of the Lord. He was displeased with this and went on fast imploring the Lord to make known His existence on the hill. Next day a servant of the king came cheerfully to the king and narrated briefly that a red line was

there on a rock. In no time the king along with his men and materials came to the spot to break the rock at the entrance of the cave. Unfortunately while breaking the stumbling-block, a soldier struck the navel of the Lord with his crow-bar. There upon the blood of the Lord spilt out from the navel. Then the king begged the pardon of the Lord and with the permission of the holy saints, the navel was filled up with the sandal paste. Immediately the flow of the blood was stopped. The king offered delicious dishes to the Lord and distributed them to the people, who gathered there. The king took leave of the Lord and appointed Mallanna, one of his important generals, to look after the temple for some time. He arranged daily worship and the "aṅga ranga bhōgas" for the Lord and appointed suitable persons in the service of the god. He also constructed a village there and named it "Mallūru" after his name".²⁰⁰

"Lāter on, a Deshmukh, by name Rangā Rao, constructed a village and a tank, giving the name of of Narasimha them. They were given to the Lord. He appointed servants in the service of the Lord. The village was damaged by fire every year. Vēnkaṭa Lakshmī Narasimhāchārya of Siddipet in Medak district, observed that the sight of the Lord was the cause of the burning of the village. In order to divert the attention of the Lord from the village, the Āchārya consecrated Lakshmi on the chest of the Lord, who was able to pacify the Lord. The figure of Lakshmi, inscribed on a small silver plate, was tied to the Lord. Since then, the Lord was known as 'Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy' and there was no more havoc caused to the village, Narasimha Sāgara.²⁰¹

There is Kōnēru to the west of the temple. The temple of Vēṇugōpāla Swāmy is to the west of the temple. It is on the foot of the hillock. There is a Kalyāṇa maṇṭapam to the

east, There is a sculpture of Gaja Lakshmi', carved in relief on a stone near the steps of 'Dhwaja Stamba'. The kōnēru and the kitchen of the Lord are behind the temple of Vēṇugōpāla Swāmy. To the north of the kōnēru there is a small stream of water coming from the hill which is known as 'chintāmaṇi tōgu' which flows ceaselessly in every season. It is similar to the "Papanasini Teertha" on the hill of Tirumala-Tirupati. There are four figures of Hanumān 7' high, sculptured on big rocks on the four sides of the temple on the hill, which are believed to be the kshētra pālakas.

The Temple of Nārasimha Swāmy

There are seventy five steps constructed in recent past to approach the temple on the hill. The temple of garbha griha is a cave. The roof of the cave is a big rock. The cave is 8 x 10 feet. There is an another rock which forms the back wall of the inner sanctum. On this rock, it is believed, the Lord had manifested Himself.

The lonely standing image of Nārasimha Swāmy with a lion's head and human body, and with awe inspiring form, is cārved on a rock. The Lord is 7' in height. The Lord has a lion's head, which is very big. It is 2 1/2' in height and the breadth is 2'. He wears a "makuṭa" on his head. He has protruding eyes, which are big and terrible to look at. His open mouth, rolling eyes and lolling tongue give him a fierce look. The breadth of the mouth is 6'. The Lord has big ears, which are stretched forward. His waist is thin and 8" wide. The legs are 3 1/2' in length. He is standing on a pedestal. The Lord has four hands. He holds chakra in his upper left hand. He has lotus in his lower right hand and conch is in his lower left hand. Lakshmi, inscribed on a silver plate, is hanging on the chest of the Lord. The form of the Lord is fearful and He faces the south.

The procession images, made of copper, are installed on a pedestal. Ādi Lakshmi is on the right side of the Lord and Chenchu Lakshmi is on the left. To the left of these images, in the front line, black stone images of Nammālvār, Periālvār and Tirumangai Ālvār are installed. There is a 'Chakra bēra', which is used for the celebration of "Chakra teertham" during the annual festival of the Lord.

At a distance of three feet from the right Dwāra pālaka, there is a stone image of Hanumān folding his hands and standing, facing the door of the temple. To the left side of the door of the cave, the stone image of Garuḍa with folded hands is standing, facing south. The Mukha mantapa of the Lord is of recent construction with wooden pillars and palm-leaves as the roof,

The Priest is a Śrīvaiṣṇava. The worship of the Lord is performed in accordance with the Pāncharātra Āgama. Daily 'abhishēkam' is performed to the 'Śālagrāmas' and on Saturdays 'Tailābhishēkam' is performed to Lord Narasimha Swamy. Food particularly, cooked rice and 'Sāmbhar' are offered to the Lord as "naivēdya". everyday, in addition to the bhogas (food offerings) given by the devotees to the Lord.

On Mārgaśīra Śuddha Ekādaśi (December) people, local and from distant places and from other districts, visit the Lord and have His darśan at the entrance of the temple. All important Hindu festivals are being followed here. The annual festival of the Lord commences from the birth day of the Lord, i.e., from Vaiśākha Śuddha Chaturdaśi to Bahuḷa Panchami (May). The Programme of the annual festival is as follows :

- 1, Jayanti of the Lord, Ankurārpaṇa, Dhwarzarōhaṇa and Eduru kōlu—Chaturdaśi.
2. Kalyāṇōtsavam of the Lord (Talambraī)—Pournami.

3. Car-festival—(Rathōtsavam)—Pāṭiyami.
4. Sadasyam - Vidiya
5. Teppōtsavam and Dōpu sēva - Tadiya.
6. Chakrateertham, Nāgavalli and purṇāhuti - Chaviti.
7. Vasantōtsavam - Panchami.

The temple committee, the Executive Officer of the Endowments Department of the State and the priest, run the temple. The source of income to the temple is from the liberal contributions of the devotees only. The priests is paid by the Endowments Department for his service to the god.

During the annual festival of the Lord, there is a big congregation of the devotees, who come from far and wide. About ten thousand people, local and from other districts, congregate on the eve of the car-festival of the Lord. There is a heavy rush to the temple during the months of Vaiśākha (May) and Srāvaṇa (August). During these months, every day, nearly fifty pilgrims attend the temple and on other days of the year about ten people attend the temple to pay their respects and to fulfil their vows to the Lord. The people visit the temple to celebrate the "hair cutting" and marriage ceremonies here. Some devotees tie the bullocks to the Dhvajastamba in fulfilment of their vows and celebrate "Satyanārāyaṇa vratam". The sandal-wood paste filled in the navel of the Lord, is removed once in a week, particularly on Saturday. It is stated that the childless people would take the sandal paste and eat it. The people, suffering from evil spirits, take the sandal paste and swallow it. It is widely believed that the sandal paste, if taken orally by the devotees, would fulfil the desires of the devotees.²⁰²

The Religious experience of Ramamurti Pantulu.

About ten years back, as the priest of the temple

narrated²⁰³ "Śrī Rāma Murti Pantulu, a resident of Rājāpēt. Tq. Eṭuri-nāgaram, was sailing in a launch across the flooded Gōdāvari river along with many other passengers. As the ill-fated launch came to the middle of the river, water started entering into it, owing to some unknown defect. Every one of them knew that their end was approaching fast. Then Rāma Murti prayed to Lord Narasimha Swāmy of Malluru and promised that, if he escaped from this catastrophe by the grace of the Lord, he would construct a flight of steps from the top to the bottom of the temple. A large quantity of water entered into the launch by then and it was drowned. But fortunately, he held on to a wooden plank and reached the shore. After some time, he visited the temple of Malluru and constructed the steps, fulfilling his vow to the Lord".

NARSAMPET TALUK

1. Timmampēt

Timmampēt is situated at a distance of 8 KMS from Narsampēt, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy in the village. The annual festival is celebrated for a day on chaitra śuddha pāṭyami (April). About 200, local Hindus congregate. It is of local significance.

2. Panikara

Panikara is situated at a distance of 30 KMS from Narsampet. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy in a cave on the hillock, near the village. The pujari is Brahmin. The annual festival is celebrated for a day on Jyēshta Śuddha Purnima (June). This festival is confined to this and surrounding villages.

MAHABUBABAD TALUKA

1. Ingurti.

Ingurti is situated at a distance of 11 KMS from the Kēsamdram Railway Station and 19 KMS from Torrur on the Warangal-Khammam bus route. This is an ancient village of historical significance. There is a temple of Lakshmī Narasimha Swamy on the hillock at a distance of four furlongs from the village. The other place of worship in the village is the temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy.

There are some inscriptions relating to the temple and information is gathered from interviewing the priest and the local persons. There is an inscription on a pillar in the temple of Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy in the village, dated Ś-1337, Manmatha (A. D. 1415). It states that a certain Mantrirāju Timmarāju had the temple (nagaru) and maṇṭapa constructed for Śri Narasimha, the Lord of Lakshmi of Inguriki (Ingurti).²⁰⁴

There is a local tradition, which is current among the people relating to the two temples, one in the village and the other on the hillock to the north-west of the village.²⁰⁵

Traditional Account of the Temple in the village.

Long long ago, there was a temple of a thousand pillars here, now believed to have been under the place where the village stands. When ever the villagers dig the earth, a number of sculptures of stones, black stone images of Nandi and other temple stones are found. Here in the forest village, 'Mētrā-sipalle', there was a bitter fight between the forces of king Gaṇapatidēva of Kākatīyas one side and on the otherside his feudatories. The feudatories dismantled the temple and con-

structed a big building (Gaḍi) with the stones of the temple. Still there are many stones and pillars bearing sculptures in the stone walls of the building (Gaḍi) and out side. Now there is a school running in that Gadi. There are many stone sculptures, collected from different places of the village, in the temple premises of Rāma Lingēśwera Swāmy.

Traditional account of the temple on the Hillock.

“The present trustee of the temple, Machcharla Pattābhi Ramaiah’s great grand ancestor, Machcharla Dharmapuri was a staunch devotee of Lord Lakshmī Narasimha Swāmy of Dharmapuri, a renowned pilgrimage centre in Karīmānagar district. Every year, on the eve of the Brahmōtsavas of the Lord, he used to go to Dharmapuri. But in his old age he could not move any where and his heart was burning to see the Lord of Dharmapuri. The very sacred idea of visiting the Lord of Dharmapuri was eating his flesh and blood. He gave-up his food and drink. Pleased with his intense and incessant devotion, the Lord appeared in his dream and said that he would manifest on the hillock nearby to enable him to worship him. Soon the Lord did so and the villagers constructed a temple with a mantapa”.

The Temple in the Village.

On either side of the Simhadwara of the temple, there are two figures of lions, sculptured on stones. Infront of it, there is an inscription on a stone-pillar relating to the reign of Kākatīya Gaṇapatideva (Ś-1128, Kshya, A. D. 1206). It gives the genealogy of the Naṭavādi Chiefs.²⁰⁶ To the right side of the temple at some distance, there is a separate temple for the pious Vaishnavite saint, Rāmānuja, who is believed to be the incarnation of Ādiśēsha. It was constructed by Beddirāju Tirumala Rao, fifty years ago.²⁰⁷ Opposite to this

temple, there is a four-pillered Kalyāṇa Mantapa, where the marriage ceremony of the Lord takes place. The temple has boundary walls. To the east of the temple, there is "yagna śāla", where hōmam is performed during the annual festival of the Lord.

The temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

The garbha griha has two parts. One is sanctum, and the other is antarala, where the images of the Ālvārs are installed. The Mulabēra is Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy, who has Four hands. He holds disc and conch in his upper right and left hands respectively. His lower right hand is in 'abhaya hasta' and the left one is in embrace of goddess Lakshmi, who is seated on the left lap of the Lord. He hangs down his right leg on an 'asana bending from the knee. On his folded left leg, Lakshmi is seated. There is a 'Śilā prabha' surrounding the image of the Lord, on which the ten incarnations of the Lord are sculptured. The Lord has open mouth and his tongue is protruding and curled up. The Lord is in sitting posture with Lakshmi on his left lap. The height of the god and the goddess is 3' and 2' respectively. Lakshmi holds a lotus-bud in her right hand and she is hanging down her left hand. She wears hārās. In front of the Mulabēra of the Lord, there are procession images (Utsava Vighrahas) of Śīta, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, which are made of copper. Over these idols, there is a silver prabha. Below these idols, there is an idol of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy along with Lakshmi, which is surrounded with silver prabha.

In the 'antarala', to the left of the sanctum the procession image of Āṇḍāl, and the black stone images of the twelve Ālvārs to the left of the sanctum, are installed.

On either side of the door, dwārapālakas are sculptured

and two bronze images of Jaya and Vijaya are also installed, on each side. The area of the mukha mantapa is 18 x 18 feet. There is an inscription on a stone pillar in the mukha mantapa of the temple of the Lord. The pillars have no sculpture at all.

Lord Narasimha Swamy on the Hillock

The temple is on the lower part of the hillock. It is believed that Lord Narasimha Swamy manifested Himself on a big rock. This rock is in the sanctum, which is built up with stones with the help of four stone pillars, and has a small mouth. On either side of the small mouth, conch and disc are sculptured on the rock. Above the mouth, which is 2" high, a hood of the serpent is visible. All these have been taken to be of Lord Narasimha Swāmy. The rock is decorated with the three "nāmās". There are black stone images of Uḍayavarulu, Nammālvār and Tirumangai Ālvār in the sanctum of the Lord. The area of the sanctum is 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 feet. The antarala is 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 feet, which is built up with stones. Above the door of 'antarala', 'Gaja Lakshmi' is sculptured on the stone. There are twelve stone pillars in the mukha mantapa of the Lord, on which the roof is built up.

The priest is a Śrīvaishṇava. Vaikhānasa Āgama, particularly Vaikhanasa grihya Sūtras are being followed here, Abhishēkam with oil is performed to the Lord on Saturday and on festival days, but every day the Lord is worshipped and offered 'naivēdya' (food offering).

All festivals, including Nrisimha Jayanthi, are celebrated in the village temple only. Adhyayanōtsavam is celebrated in the last three days of Dhanurmāsam (December-January) and the annual festival of the Lord is celebrated for six days, from phālguna Śuddha Ekādāśi to Bahula Pādyami (March). The programme is as follows :

1. Dhvajārōhaṇa - Ekādaśi,
2. Eduru kōlu, Kalyāṇam and Gaja Vahana Dwādaśi.
3. Hōmam & Hanumān Sēva - Trayōdaśi.
4. Sadasyam & Garuḍa Sēva - Chaturdaśi.
5. Purnāhuti & Aśva Vāhanam - Purnīma.
6. Pushpa yagam & Sheshavataram - Bahula padynmi,

The marriage ceremony of the Lord, Pushpayāgam and Chakravari ceremonies are celebrated on the hillock and the remaining ceremonies are performed in the temple of the village. About one thousand people, local and from the neighbouring villages, congregate on this occasion,

The temple committee and the priests run the temple. A few local people visit the temple of the Lord on the hillock on the day of "Nagulachaviti" to pour milk into the two ant-hills, which are in the sanctum of Lord Narasimha Swāmy. About a hundred people visit the temple for this purpose. During the month of Śrāvaṇa (August) and on Saturdays, nearly 20-30 people visit the Lord every day. The Local people go for picnic to the hillock and they visit the Lord during the month of Śrāvaṇa.

2. Narasimlapet

Narasimlapet is situated at a distance of forty kilometres from the Mahabūbābād Railway Station and eight Kilometres from Warangal-Khammam bus route. There are two temples of Narasimha here, one in the village and the other on the hill near the village. Some inscriptions and oral interviews with the priest and the local people are the main sources of information relating to the temple.

There is an inscription on a hillock called Dēvuniḡṭṭa, which records that a certain Krishṇāchārya excavated a tank

at Nrisimhāchala in Tattipalli for the abulations of the brahmins in Ś-1359, piṅgaḷa (A.D. 1437-8).²⁰⁸ There is a traditional legend about the origin of the sacred Kshētram.²⁰⁹

It says that "this Kshētram was formerly the hermitage of Kapila Māharshi. He did penance and prayed to the Lord to manifest Himself on this hill. The Lord did so fulfilling the cherished desire of the Maharashi, in Ārchārūpa. This image is known as Yōgānanda Narasimha Swāmy. Beside this image, another larger image of the Lord was consecrated. The Lord is known as Kapila Yōgānanda Narasimha Swāmy. During the nights, sages sang the devotional songs of the Lord. One night the village head heard the melodious songs from the hill. He went to the hill immediately and saw nothing except a small stone-image there. Next night, the Lord appeared in his dream and ordained him to construct a temple for Him, as he had disturbed Him the previous night. Accordingly the village head man had constructed a temple and arranged daily worship for the Lord."

There are three hills to the west of the village, To the west of the hill of the Lord, there is another hill, on which the ruined walls of the forts are seen. There is a two storeyed kalyāṇa Maṇḍapa to the west of the temple and in front of the main entrance of the temple. There is a "kōṇēru" on the hill to the north-west of the temple and also five more water ponds on the hill. The temple of Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy is on the hill to the west of the village at a distance of one kilometre from the village. The roof and the walls of the inner sanctum are built with stones, The area of the sanctum is 12 square feet.

The presiding deity is Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy. The Lord has four hands. He holds Chakra in his upper right hand and Śankha in his upper hand. His lower

hands are stretched forward and supported on the knees. He sits crossing his legs. There is a stone "Yōga Pāṭṭa" around his knees. He wears hārās. The Lord keeps his feet on an "asanam". The Lord has moustache, eyes and three "Nāmās", which are made of silver. There is a stone prabha over the image of the Lord, on which the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are worked out. There is a bronze Makarātōraṇa on the "Śilā prabha" of the Lord. The Lord is 1 1/2' in height. There is a black stone image of Lākṣmī along with prabha, sculptured on a single slab of stone, which is kept to the left of the Lord. This image is 1' in height. She holds a lotus in her right hand and keeps her left hand on her left knee. She hangs down her right leg bending from the knee and she folds her left leg bending at the right knee. The Lord and his consort wear bracelets and anklets.

By the side of the presiding deity (Mūla Swāmi), there is a black stone image of the Lord, which is 9" in height, with an open mouth. He has four hands. He holds disc and conch in his upper hands. The lower left hand is supported on his left knee and his lower right hand is broken. There is a separate temple in the village for the utsava idols.

It front of the sanctum to the right, in the mukha mantapa, in a separate room on the raised edges of the walls, twelve Āḷvārs are installed, seven of them facing east, and the remaining five facing south. There are eight stone pillars in the mukha mantapa. The mukha mantapa and the temple have boundry walls,

The priests are Srivaishṇavas. Pāñcharātra Āgama is followed here. 'Abhisēkam' is performed to the sālagramas every day. On Saturdays and on festival days, "abhishēkam" (Ghritābhi Shēkam) is performed with ghee.

Nrisimha Jayanti is celebrated on Vaiśāka Śuddha Trayodaśī (May). On Kārtika purnīma (November), villagers take bath in the kōṇēru of the Lord, which is considered to be holy one and brings merit to those who dip in the kōṇēru on that day. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from Vaiśākha Śuddha Pournīma to Bahuḷa Chaviti (May). The marriage ceremony of the Lord is celebrated on the hill. The utsava idols of the Lord are brought from the village temple to the hill for this purpose. The programme is given below :

1. Kalyāṇam of the Lord on the hill — Pournīma.
2. Hōmam and baliharaṇam — Pāḍyami.
3. Hōmam and balīnaraṇam — Vidiya.
4. The decorated billock-carts go round the hill — Tadiya.
5. Ekānta sēva — Chaviti.

About one thousand, local and neighbouring villagers, attend this festiveal. There are two priests enjoying the lands attached to the temple. They are hereditary and run the temple in turn.

During the month of Vaiśākha (May), the villagers visit the Lord on the hill. Every day during this month, 10-20 people pay their respects to the Lord. On kārtika Pournīma (November) the local people take the 'darśana' of the Lord on the hill. The devotees offer their gifts in cash and kind to the Lord in fulfilment of their vows. Local and the neighbouring villagers visit the temple on certain occasions only.

3. Kantayapalem.

Kanṭāyapālem is situated at a distance of 29 KMS from the Kēsamudram Railway Station. There is a temple of Nara-

simha Swamy in the village. It is in ruined condition. There is no worship to the lord here.

4. Kesamudram.

Kesamudram is situated at a distance of 16 KMS from Mahabubābād, the head quarters of the taluk and 46 KMS from Warangal. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy on the Golla Guṭṭa, near the village. The temple is now in ruined condition. There is no worship to the Lord here.

5. Kommaguda (Hamlet of Lakshmi Puram)

Kommaguda is situated at a distance of 8 KMS from the Māhabubābād Railway Station on the Kājipāt-Vijayawāḍa Section of the South central Railway. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in the village. The annual festival is performed for one day on Kartika Śuddha Panchami (November). About 500, Hindu devotees congregate. This festival is confined to this village only.

6. Narasimlagudem.

Narasimlagudem is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from the Kesamudram Railway Station by bus. There is a temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in a cave (dona) on Komaragiri hillock, near the village. It is believed that the Lord had manifested Himself there. The festival of the Lord is celebrated twice a year on Chaitra Śuddha Pāḍyami (April) and on Vaiśāka Bahuja Pāḍyami (May). It is of local significance.

7. Nerada.

Nerada is situated at a distance of 24 KMS from the Mahabubābād Railway Station. There is a stone image of Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock, near the village. It is wor-

shipped by the villagers. There is no temple for the Lord here. The annual festival is celebrated for a day on Magha Śuddha Purnīma (February).

8. Kandikonda.

Kāndikōṇḍa is situated at a distance of 19 KMS from the Mahabubābād Railway Station by bus. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmy on the hillock. It is in dilapidated condition. The Lord is known here as Kāṇḍagiri Narasimha Swāmy. There is no image except a gigantic ant-hill, which grows every year. It is believed that the Lord resides in the ant-hill. There is also a temple in the village with the image of Narasimha Swamy.

There is a kōṇēru on the hillock. The annual festival of kāṇḍagiri Narasimha Swāmy is celebrated on Kārtika Purnīma (November) for a day. About 10,000 devotees, local and from other parts of the district, congregate. Free feeding is arranged for the pilgrims on that day.

Tonsure and marriage ceremonies are conducted by some devotees at this temple.

JANGAM TALUK

1. Lingala Ghanapuram.

Lingāla Ghanapurām is situated at a distance of 9 KMS from Jangām, the head quarters of the taluk. There is a temple of Narasimha Swāmi on the hillock, at a distance of 1 1/2 KMS from the village. The priest is a Śrīvaiṣṇava. The festival is performed for a day on Śrāvaṇa Bahuḷa Aṣṭami (August). It is of local significance.

2. Kadavendi.

Kadavendi is situated at a distance of 30 KMS from the

Jangām Railway Station. There is a temple of Vanakoṇḍa Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy in a cave on the hillock at a distance of five kilometres from the village. The image of the Lord is in the form of man-lion. The pujāri is a Śrīvaiṣṇava. The annual festival is celebrated for seven days from Phālguna Śuddha Purnīma to Bahuja Shashti (March),

3. Palakurti.

The village is situated at a distance of 28 kilometres from Jangam. The temple of Lord Narasimha Swāmy is in a cave on the hill, which is 1/2 a kilometre to the west of the village. It is believed that Pālakuriki Sōmanātha, the great śaiva poet in Telugu, belonged to this village and he was a contemporary of Kākatiya Pratāparudra.²¹⁰

The temple of the Lord is in a cave in the middle of the hill. There are 316 steps to reach the temple. After crossing the steps, there is Sōmeśwara temple under a big rock. Beside it, the temple of Narasimha is in the cave. The cave is straight, 3' wide, 3' high and 18' long. It faces the north. At the end of the cave, there is a turning to the right. At this place, it is believed, Lord Narasimha had manifested Himself on the side rock of the cave. The area of this cave is 1 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 1 1/2 feet. If one observes, there is some thing like the head on the rock, which is 6'' in height. It faces the north-east. The head is taken to be the form of Lord Narasimha. There is an ant-hill, the people believe, Ādiśēsha resides. This is the sacred abode of Lord Narasimha Swamy.

It appears that the big rock is incised round and made it as a cave to reach the abode of the Lord, which is also a cave by cutting the rock. There is a black stone image of an Ālvār with folded hands and it is 1' in height. There is some crevice in the cave, which goes upward from this place. The utsava idols of the Lord are installed in the temple of Satyanarayana Swāmy, at the foot of the hill.

Before the cave, there is a mukha maṇṭapa with 12 stone pillars. The inside roof of the central four pillars is star-shaped and a flower is carved in the centre. The maṇṭapa is 13 1/2 x 10 1/2 feet. There is an open place before the maṇṭapa with a stone wall at the edge of it. The wall was built in 1942 (Chitrabānu), as was written there.

The priest of this temple is a Smārta brahmin. He follows the Smārta tradition in the worship of the Lord. Everyday "abhisēkam" is performed to the Lord and naivēdyam" is offered. The annual festival of the Lord is celebrated from Māgha Bahuḷa Trayōdaśi to Phālguna Śuddha Vidiya (February). The programme is given below :

1. Kalyānam at night. Bhajana and cultural programmes — Trayōdaśi.
2. Rathōtsavam (Car-festival) at night and bhajana. śakatōtsavam at evening. The bullock-carts go round the hill-Chaturdaśi.
3. Cultural programmes, Sadasyam and sēva at night — Amāvasya.
4. Chakravari, literary and cultural programmes — Vidiya.
5. Dōlotsavam 4.00 A. M. (Early morning). Pāruvēta and Agniguṇḍam — Tadiya.

The following festivals are celebrated.

Nrisimha Jayanti (May) and Dhanurmāsam (December-January), a special worship to the Lord, in the early morning for a month are celebrated on the hill and in the temple of Satyanārāyaṇa Swāmy, as utsava idols of the Lord are installed there. Gōkulashtami and Śamīpuja on the day of Dasara are celebrated in the temple of Satyanārāyaṇa Swāmy.

The annual festivals of the Lord Someshwara and Lord Narasimha Swamy go together on Sivarātri (February-March). During the annual festival about 25,000 people, local and from other districts, congregate.

The temple is run by a committee known as Śrī Sōmeswara Lakshmi Narasimha Dēvasthānam committee. Every day nearly 15 people visit the Lord and on Saturdays, nearly fifty people pay their respects to the Lord. During the months of Śrāvaṇa (August), Kārtikam (November) and Māgham, (February) 100 to 150 people visit the temple.

The pilgrims go round the two temples of Sōmanna and Narasimha through a crevice in between the two big rocks. It is firmly believed that if the pilgrims have evil intentions in their heart and are not pure physically, bees bite them, which are countless in number there. There are nearly thirty honeycombs on the hill. The temple on the hill is known as Sōmeswara Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy. People believe that there is no difference between Hari and Hara.

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5. See the temple of Dharmapuri in Karimnagar district in Chapter IV.
6. Gathered from an interview with the priest of the temple.
7. Interviewed the manager of the temple.
8. Information gathered from interviewing the Priest, Rameshkumar, of the temple.
9. Interviewed the priest of the temple, Mahant Gōpāldās, who is a hereditary priest.
10. Information has been gathered from interviewing the priest of the temple, Srikishan, son of Murlidhar.
11. Gathered from interviewing the Priest of the temple, Pandit Rāmachandra Śarma.
12. Interviewed the Priest of the temple, Govardhana Sarma, a Marwadi Brahmin.
13. Gathered from interviewing Mangaldās, the mahant (Priest) of the temple.
14. Ibid.
15. Interviewed the hereditary priestess, Smt. Kaḷāvati.
16. Interview with the priest of the temple.
17. Gathered from interviewing R. Vēnkaṭa Varadachary, the Priest of the temple.
18. Interviewed Mahant Om Prakash Das, the Priest of the temple.
19. -Ibid-
20. Interviewed Sūrya Prakāsh Dās, the priest of the temple.

21. Gathered from an interview with Ch. Madhusudhana-charya, the Priest of the temple.
22. Naradīya Mahapūrṇa (Purva Khanda, Adh, 71. 51-55) portrays a fierce aspect of Lakshmi Narasimha. According to it, Lakshmi, holding a lotus in her hand, is embraced by Nrisimha. He wears a garland of entrails and the Yajnopavita made of a serpent. He has five faces adorned with the moon-crest, one of them being green. Each face has three eyes. Ten hands forming a circle hold rosary, mace, lotus, conch-shell, bow, pestle, discus, sword and arrow. (Kalpana Desai, Iconography of Vishnu p.94)
23. Gathered from an interview with S. Varadāchārya, a priest of the temple.
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28. Interview with the Priest of the temple, Kenjerla Rāmāchārya.
29. Interview with the priest, Kanjerla Rāmāchārya.
30. Gateered from interviewing the priest of the temple, Suraiyah gāru.
31. Gathered from interviewing Rāma Chāry, a local Vaiṣṇava.

32. Information has been gathered from interviewing, Sant Tayaru, a local learned women.
33. -Ibid-
34. Unpubiished palm leaf sanskrit MS with 105 chapters. It is a palm-leaf. M.S. which is with Jagannathāchārya of Chaliganti village, of Jagtial taluk, Karimnagar dist.
35. Unpublished sanskrit M.S. with (5) five chapters. It is with S. Narahari of Dharmapuri, Dist. Karimnagar.
36. P.V. Parabrahma Śāstry, Inscriptions of A.P. Karimnagar district, p.10,
37. Ibid. p.11.
38. This is an unpublished inscription found on a stone in the Ramēshwara temple at Dharmapuri of Karimnagar district. On the same stone of this inscription, there is an other inscription of kakatiya Ganapati dēva, dated Ś-1168 (=1246 AD), which was published. Much is abraded of the two inscriptions.
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40. Lakshmi Ranjanam, K., Āndhra Sāhitya Charitra Sangraham.p.84.
41. Bammera pōtana, Nārāyaṇa shatakam. verse No.97.(Edi) by Swāmi Siva shankara swāmi. A.P. Sahitya Academy, p. 17.
42. Swāmi Śiva Shankara Swāmi (Edi) shataka samputam. part II. Nārāyaṇa Shatakam p.1,
43. Dr. Khandavalli Lakshmi Ranjanam, Āndhra Sāhitya Charitra Sangraham p.69.
44. Koravi gōparāju, Srmhāsanadwātrinshika.21 st, story (8-177).

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49. Ibid.
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206. Vēṅkata Ramanayya N; Inscriptions of Āndhra Pradesh, Warangal District, p. 138.
207. Information gathered from interviewing the priest of the temple.
208. Vēṅkata Ramanayya, N, Inscriptions of Āndhra Pradesh, Warangal District, A.P. Hyderābād, 1974, p.282.
209. Information gathered from interviewing Gōvardhana Āgamāchārya, a scholar of the village.
210. Lakshmi Ranjanam, Khandavalli; Āndhra Sāhitya Charitra Sangraham, p.43.

CHAPTER V

RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

Rituals and the festivals in Vogue in the Narasimha Centres in Telangāna are dealt with in this chapter. General Hindu festivals are performed in all the temples. These rituals and festivals help to promote the development of the cult of Narasimha. Temples are the important places, where people gather to witness the ceremonies performed during the festivals. These festivals and rituals strengthen the sense of devotion among the people and they help for the growth and popularity of the cult.

The image of Nṛsimha is described in the *Harivaṃśa*¹ and the *Viṣṇudharmōttaram*.² One of the most interesting early representations of the Man-lion incarnation is executed on a seal found at Basarh, datable to the early Gupta period.³

Forms of God :

Ahīrbdhnya Sāmhita, one of the earliest *Pañcharātra* works, recognises the five fold forms of the deity.⁴

1. Para (Vāsudēva in paramapada).
2. Vyūha (the four fold manifestation)
 - (a) Vāsudēva
 - (b) Saṃkarṣaṇa
 - (c) Pradyumna and
 - (d) Aniruddha
3. Vibhava (incarnatory)
4. Antaryāmi (immanent)
5. Aṃśa (the images)

Vishṇu dharmōttara purāṇa states that the gods were visible in their physical forms in the Satya, Trēta and Dvāpāra yugas, but with the advent of Kali, they can be seen only in images.⁵

Krishṇamāchārya, Śatāvadhāni, an eminent scholar in sanskrit and Vaiṣṇavism, of kōruṭla in Karīmṇagar district, A. P. on enquiry revealed the eight forms of Narasiṃha (Ashta Nrisiṃha) from a Sanskrit ślōka, which was transmitted orally by his fore-fathers. They are eight in number. They are

1. Nara-siṃha (Man-lion)
2. Gaṇḍabhērūṇḍa
- 3, Vyāghra Vaktraya
4. Vānara rūpa
5. Varāha rūpa (Varāha form)
6. Ashwa Vaktrya
7. Garuḍa rūpa and
8. Bhaḷluka vaktrya

According to him, the Pañcha mukha Nirasimha forms are :

- (a) Narasiṃha (Man-lion)
- (b) Garuḍa
- (c) Varāha
- (d) Ashwa mukha and
- (e) Bhaḷlukam

Mode of worship

The Vēdāṅgās are ancillary Vedic texts, which are instruments in understanding the Vedas. There are six Vedangas which are post Vedic works, which are not śrutis. Kalpa, the

science of rituals, is one of them. There are two types of texts dealing with the science of rituals.

- (a) Śrauta sūtrās (A Manual of large public sacrifices and public festivals) and
- (b) Grihya sūtrās (A Manual of simple private rituals)

There were also Dharma sūtrās, which covered the code of conduct. The prominent authors were Aśvalāyana, Baudhāyana and Āpastamba and so on.⁶

Worship is one of the ways to propitiate God. The mode of worship is of five kinds in Tolaṅgāṇa area.

- a) Pañcarātra
- b) Vaikhānasa
- c) Madhwa
- d) Smārta and
- e) Nimbārg

a) Pancaratra :

It is stated that God Viṣṇu had stated in five nights to five saints the 'pañcharātra Āgāma' in the following manner.⁷

First night to Ananta

Second night to Garuḍa

Third night to Viśwakṣēna

Fourth night to Brahma and

Fifth night to Indra.

The pañcharātra saṁhitas came to comprise, according to tradition, a set of 108 works, but as a matter of fact they number at least 225 works.⁸

Pāñcharātra Āgama is regarded as superior to the Vēdas by the Vaiṣṇavās, who consider it as Mula-vēda, the holy teaching of Nārāyaṇa to Nara and to a succession of teachers. The Vyāsa doctrine finds a place in this system. Nārāyaṇa is the only desired deity of worship. This system is said to be prevalent from very ancient time, even before the date of Mahābhārata.⁹

The Pāñcarātra texts repeatedly mention that the Pāñcarātrin should be a performer of the Pañca Kalas, which are explained as five acts of worship performed during a day, divided into five parts. The five acts are stated to be.¹⁰

- a) Abhigamana (Approaching the temple with one's mind, speech and body concentrated on the deity)
- b) Upādāna (Obtaining the materials for worship)
- c) Ijya (The performance of worship)
- d) Svādhyāya (Hearing, meditating, discoursing and studying the sacred scriptures) and
- e) Finally, the performance of Yōga.

The pāñcharātra Saṁhitās recommend the branding of Viṣṇu's weapons, the Chakra (discus) and Śaṅkha (conch) on the arms of the initiate. The marking of the forehead and various parts of the body with the sectarian puṇḍra mark is an old practice, which is still followed by the Vaiṣṇavās.

The Jayākhya Saṁhita speaks of two kinds of worship.¹¹

- a) Bāhya Yāga. (The external, which consists of the worship of the icons and rituals connected with it)

- b) **Mānasa Yāga.** (The internal which requires the visualisation of a mental image of the deity and worshipping him with the help of mantra (sacred formulae), mudra, (Symbolic hand gestures) and nyāsa (Placing the sacred letters or mantrās in different parts of the body)

It also involves the performance of the mānasajapa or mental recitation of the sectarian formula, Mula manṭapa i. e., "Om namō Nārāyaṇāya."

Viṣṇudharmōttara states that the dedication of a dance, song or musical instrument, is far more meritorious than of flowers and food (naivēdya). It fulfills all desires and equals in virtue the performance of a sacrifice.¹² The pañcharātra text prescribes "Pañcha Saṁskārās" to its followers, They are

1. Tapah (branding of disc and conch)
2. Puñḍrah (the three caste marks on the fore head)
3. Nāmam (Tirunāmas etc-recitation)
4. Mantrah (Ashtākṣari mantra) and
5. Yāgah (recitation of formula)

Shad beras :

Generally there are five images and Salagrāmās of Viṣṇu, which are installed in the temples. They are

1. Mulabēra (presiding deity)
2. Kautuka Archa (utsava idols)
3. Karmārcha (yāga bēram)
4. Bali Archa (Daily Sacrifice-image)
5. Śayana Archa and
6. Salagrāma (Teerth Archa)

b) The Vaikhanasa Agama :

Vakhānasa is said to be the incarnation of Brahma in Naimiṣāranya, where God Viṣṇu initiated him in to the mysteries of worship. It is also said that he came to the earth to organise the worship of the Lord.¹⁸ They do not worship the Āḷvārs and Āchāryās, nor brand their bodies with the emblems of Chakra and Śankha. They do not recite the Tamiḷ Prabaṇdhās during worship. But they follow all the Hindu festivals in general. The vardhaṇṭi of Vikhanasāchārya is celebrated on Śrāvaṇa Pournima (August).

Pāncharātra	Vaikhānasa
1. Samāśrayanam (branding of Chakra and Śankha)	1. Garbha saṁskāra
2. The priest takes the sacred water after distributing it among the devotees.	2. The priest takes the sacred water after worshipping the God
3. It is known as Āgnēyam	3. It is known as Saumyam
4. It has Shadbērās	4. It has five bēras. They are Viṣṇu, Puruṣa, Satya, Achyuta and Aniruddha.

Vaikhānasam has Tāntram, Kāṇḍam, Samvida and Adhikāram. Atri, Kāśyapa Maharshi, Mārecci and Bhrigu are the heads respectively. It is believed by the Vaishṇavas of the Vaikhānasa sect that it is an ancient one and he is an Ādi Vaishṇava. Vaikhānasa Grihya Sutramu is the basis of this sect. The other important books of this sect are

1. Uttama Brahma Vidyā Sāramu.
2. Vighanēsa mahima mañjari.
3. Daśa vidha hētu nirupanamu and
4. Vighanasa Grihya Sutra Bhāshyam by Śreenivāsa Deekshitulu.

c) Madhwa Tradition :

The Madhwa tradition is being followed in accordance with the principles of Tāntra sāra of Madhwāchārya, the founder of 'Madhwa' religion. They worship Viṣṇu, Lakshmi, Brahma and Vāyu respectively. The other books of this sect with considerable importance are Krishṇāchāra Smṛiti and Madhwa Bhāshyam.

According to this traditions. Abhishēkam is performed, preceded by 'Nirmālyavisayanaum', (removal of previous day's flowers). The bath of the Lord is performed with milk, curd, sugar, ghee and honey. This type of bath is known as 'Pañchāmṛita Abhishēkam'. Arghyam and Pādyam are known as 'Hastōdakam' in this tradition. There is no 'naivēdyam' to the Lord on every Ekādaśi, twice in a month.

The following festivals are celebrated by the Madhwa people along with other Hindu festivals.

1. Vyāsa pournīma-Vaiśākha pournīma (May).
2. Hanumān Jayaṇti-Vaiśākha Bahuḷa Daśāmi (May).
3. Ananta Padmanābha Vratam-Bhadra Pada Śuddha Chaturdaśi (September).
4. Tulasi Vivāham-Kārtika Śuddha Dwādaśi (November).
5. Dhātri Havanam (under the tree of usiri) - Kārtika Śuddha Chaturdaśi (November).
6. Deepotsavam-Kārtika Pournīma (November).
7. Dhanurmāsam (15th December to 14th January).

8. Madhwa Navami (Māgha Śuddha Navami-February) on this day, Madhwāchārya left for Badarīkāśramam and disappeared and
9. Vasāntōtsavam-Phālguna Bahuḷa Pāḍyami-(March).

The following birth days of the Dāsās (Dāsaru) are celebrated.

1. Purāṇḍara dās-Pushya Bahuḷa Amāvasya (January)
2. Vijaya dāsa-Kārtika Śuddha Dāśami (November).
3. Gōpala dāsa-Pushya Bahuḷa Aṣṭami (January) and
4. Jagannātha dāsa-Bhādra Pada Śuddha Navami (September).

The Madhwas have Samaśrayanam of Taptamudra dhāraṇa (branding ceremony), They use the Śrīgandham (Sandal paste) for decorating the Lord on his fore-head instead of 'Tirumaṇi' and 'Śrīchurna'. They decorate their fore heads with Akṣata (mixture of lime and turmeric) and Aṅgāra, a black tilakam on the vertical line.

d) Smarta Tradition :

The priests, who belong to Smārta Brāhmins, worship the Lord with Vēdic mantrās and they perform 'Shōḍaśa upachārās' (sixteen types of service) to the Lord and they follow else, except the Vedās.

This type of worship is known as Smārta tradition, They follow all the Hindu festivals in general,

e) Nimbarg Tradition

The last type of worship to the Lord is Nimbārg tradition. The principles of Jagadguru Śrī Jī Mahārāj of Kishangad,

the fourth Nimbārg Jagad guru are being followed in the two temples at Mahankāli street and Jeera of Secunderābād. All the Hindu festivals are celebrated by the followers of Nimbārg Tradition.

Thus, Pāñcharātra, Vaikhānasa, Madhwa, Smārta and Nimbārg systems of worship are being followed in Telangāna area. Of these, the Pāñcharātra mode of worship is widely popular in Telangāna.

Vaishṇavas (Pāñcharātra, Vaikhānasa and Sātāni), Smārta Brāhmins, Madhwas and other castes like Kammari, Gouḍa, Dāsari, Golla, Padmaśāli, at a few centres, worship the Lord as the priests in the temples of Narasimha in Telangāna area. Vaishṇavs are more in number than others as the priests in the temples of Telangāna.

Archaka (priest) and his importance

There are four factors determining the greatness of a temple. They are.¹⁴

- a) The power of meditation of the founder.
- b) The nobility of the priest gained by controlling his soul.
- c) Worship and
- d) The form of the image.

A god, who is thus enshrined, bestows blessings upon the devotees and fulfills their cherished desires. The Mātya purāṇa states that the priests should be faultless, righteous persons, well-versed in the Vēdas and purāṇās and should be "dvijas" of high decent (kūlīna).¹⁵

RITUALS AND THEIR OBSERVANCE

It is firmly believed even now that the Vēdic gods, who

were invoked in the Vedic sacrifices, partook of the offerings made into fire in their own physical forms. They are worshipped now in the form of images. This caused a synthesis in the rituals of worship, with the result that the idolatrous rites were harmonised with Vedic traditions and practices.

There are two types of worship, Vēdic and Tāntric, sometimes a combination of the two, which is known as the "miśrita type" is followed in the temples. The Vedic worship of the images requires the recitation, of various maṅtrās (hymns) on the occasion of conducting different acts of worship. The introduction of śakti worship in the pañcarātra is a late feature, of which the worship of Lakshmi is a part. It is aptly remarked that the "Tāntric rituals and practices were evolved in a very old age and they belong to a type of thought that is primitive."¹⁶

The Viṣṇu-Smṛiti gives one of the earliest descriptions of the ritual of worship. It consists of the invocation or welcome of the deity, the offering of arghya or water for washing hands and feet, for sipping and bathing, offering the deity incense, garments, ornaments, flowers and so on and worshipping with lamp, which is perpetually burnt in the temple.¹⁷ The Baudhāyana Grihya Sutrās¹⁸ and Vāikhāṇasa Smārta Sutrās¹⁹ also contain similar accounts. The rites related with the daily worship of the image were systematised in these works and were later standardised into the sixteen acts of worship, (Shoḍaśa upachārās) of modern times.

The non-Vēdic or Tāntric form of worship was open to all irrespective of caste, sex and age.

The emphasis on the efficacy of the mantras is found both in the Vedic and the Tāntric traditions. The Dharma śāstrās prescribe the muttering of Vēdic maṅtrās for absolving

such sins as stealing and adultery.²⁰ The shifting emphasis from costly rituals to simple "Japa" must have contributed a good deal to the popularisation of this cult of Narasimha and the Practice must have received impetus from the sentiment of "bhakti," which made it a thing of great merit to utter the name of Narasimha on all possible occasions. To this day "nāma Saṅkīrtana (continuous recitation of god's name) is a very popular religious practice. Viṣṇu-Smṛiti states that the "Japa yajna" is ten times more meritorious than ritualistic sacrifice."²¹

Another popular practice adopted by the devotees and which is widely spread is the observation of "Vratās" (vows), particularly on all Saturdays and on Nṛsiṃha Jayānti, which require limited abstinence from food and the performance of certain acts of worship.

THE DAILY WORSHIP

Credit for systematisation of the ritual in shrines dedicated to Viṣṇu, is traditionally given to Rāmānuja and his immediate followers. Sādhū Subrahmaṇya Śāstri in his T.T.E. Report summarises the work of Rāmānuja thus, "Briefly the influence of Rāmānuja's life-long activities continued in later times in the formulation and systematization of a detailed code of temple procedure, in the establishment of Rāmānuja's disciples and their descendants in the various Vaiṣṇava centres for the propagation of his faith under the appellation of Āchārya puruṣhās."²²

Rāmānuja is believed to have not only laid certain procedures of ritual, like the reading of the Drāviḍa prabandha, but also installed his own followers to guide the temple ritual all over South India.²³ Even today the reading of Drāviḍa prabandhās like the Tiruvāimorri and the Tiruppāvai,

the worship of the twelve Ālvāri, the celebration of Adhyayanōtsava and Tirunakshtrās of the Ālvārs and Āchāryās are quite common in the shrines dedicated to Vishṇu. In spite of minor differences between the Vaikhanasa and the pañcharātra systems of worship, they agree on the basic tenet that "Archa" (icon) form is the most important form of the Lord, since it facilitates the process of "Prapatti" (surrender) to the devotees. The Īśwara Samhita is considered to be a commentary of the Śātvata Samhita, which governs the conduct of worship of the Lord on all festival days. Sometimes the priests, pressed for time, resort to the mode of procedure followed in Bhārdwāja Samhita, which takes a shorter period to finish. In certain matters, the conduct of worship is based on the modes of conduct evolved by Śiṣṭāchāra (custom or tradition). The development of worship started with the beginning of the Sagunōpāsana. (Saguna = good qualities, upāsana = worship).

The ritual or rite is the constant reiteration of sentiments towards first and last things²⁴. The priest renders his service to invoke the Cōsmic Purusha. By chanting the maṅtra ostensibly to invoke the material form of a particular god, in fact, he invokes the cosmic principle behind the form. It is believed by the orthodox priests that the performance of systematic rites in the temple purifies the performer and creates a cosmic force at a particular centre, which, by diffusion, can bring out happiness to the residents of that area in particular and to the world in general.

Programme-The Early morning session :

"After bathing and oblatinal rites, well before the sun-rise,²⁵ the priest should present himself at the doors of the temple. His daily work starts with the opening of the doors and comes to an end with the closure of the doors. The

priest wears a 'dhōti' and ties a piece of cloth around his waist. He comes with all materials for worshipping the Lord to the door of Gōpura (main entrance to the temple). There he washes his hands and feet and takes some water into his mouth. After saluting the Dwāra pālakās, ringing the bell and causing music to be produced with other instruments by others, he opens the doors of the temple, chanting some formalae. After entering into the temple, he takes circumambulation of the temple and reaches the doors of the inner sanctum. There he stands and does 'Āṅganyāsa' (Shad Āṅganyāsa) before the doors of the temple. Ringing the bell three times (Tāḷa trayam) and chanting the mantras he opens the doors of the sanctum and enters in, putting forward his right leg first and saluting the Lord. He takes care of the perpetual lamp burnt, day and night, in the inner sanctum and apart from it, he burns another lamp with oil. He removes all dried flowers and dirty things from the Lord and cleans the Lord with a clean piece of cloth. Then he wakes up the Lord who is on the bed in the previous night and takes him to the inner sanctum and places him on the appropriate seat. He keeps the accumulated dirt at the image of Vishwakṣēna, if not, by smelling it, he keeps it off the north of the temple. Then he sweeps the sanctum with broom-stick and cleans the sacred vessels and other things which are used in the ritual. He washes the clothes of the images which were worn previously. He sprinkles water on the ground in the temple chanting some 'mantrās.'²⁶

All this should be done including the services to other deities in the temple one hour and twelve minutes before dawn. Then he should fetch water from the water-pond (kōṇēru), accompanied by the musical concert, for the use of the Lord through out the day.

The Suprabhatam :

The Suprabhātam is an anthology of verses, designed to coax the deity to wakeup, so that he may shower his blessings on the waiting devotees. While chanting these verses, the priests do their routine work. The chanting of the suprabhātam is accompanied by instrumental music, outside the frontal porch, played by the 'Sannāyi Mēlam'.

The sleeping images are then mādē to stand erect by the formula (uttishṭhēti) and then they are worshipped in a preliminary fashion (laghvārchana). The Lord's presence is first invoked. He is given water for washing hands and feet and for taking in (Āchamanīyam) with suitable mantrās. The incense (dhupa), dīpa (lamp) and the "naivēdya" (food offering) are then offered to the Lord. While these are offered, music is played once again by the Sannāyimēlam. This naivēdya is known as "Balabhōgam" or "Prābōdhaki" which consists of cooked rice and curd pudding which we call "Dadhyōdanam" which is generally offered to the Lord in the morning. Then incense is offered to the Lord. This is followed by the recitation of Tamiḷ Divya Prabandhās. It is noteworthy to mention that the chorus recitation of Tamiḷ Prabandhās by the priests, starts with the poem entitled "Tiruppallāṇḍu" of Periālvār.

The early morning 'darśan' is given to the devotees, who assemble in front of the frontal porch. They are given the holy water (teertha) and allowed to see the Lord for a few minutes. The teertha consists of water mixed with different spices. This is used for the services of the Lord.

PRELIMINARIES FOR THE ĀRĀDHANA

The mode of actual worship consists of 64-38-16-10-7-5. But the Shōḍaśa (sixteen) and pañcha (five) upa-chārās are widely popular.²⁷

SHODAŚA UPACHĀRĀS

The following sixteen upachāras are followed in the temples.²⁸

1. AVAHANAM

The Lord's presence is first invoked.

2. ASANAM

He is then offered a seat (āsana).

3. PADYAM

He is given water for washing feet.

4. ARGHYAM

He is given water for washing hands.

5. ACHAMANIYAM

He is given water for taking in.

6. PANCHAMRITAM AND SNANAM

The pañchāmrita consists of the following ingredients.

- a) Milk of the cow with Sugar.
- b) Curd of the cow.
- c) Clarified butter of the cow.
- d) Honey and
- e) Small quantity of water.

After presenting Madhuparkam, Śuddha Āchamaniyam is given to him. Next comes the offering of water with Pañchamrita for the sacred bath of the Lord.

7. VASTRADWAYAM

The presentation of dress is followed by Śuddha Āchamaniyam.

8. YAJNOPAVITAM

The sacred thread is given to him. After it, Śuddha Āchamanīyam is given to him.

9. GANDHAM AND ALAMKARANAM

The sandal paste is given to the Lord. Ornaments are presented to the Lord for decoration.

10. PUSHPAM

Flowers and basil leaves are put on the Lord.

11. DHUPAM

Incense is given to the Lord.

12. DIPAM

The lamp of the wicks (lighted lamp) is offered.

13. NAIVEDYA

Cooked food is offered to the Lord.

14. TAMBULAM

Betel leaves are given.

15. NEERAJANAM

The lighted lamp is shown (Harati) to the Lord.

16. ATMA PRADAKSHINA NAMASKARAM

Finally with the performance of obeisance (namaskāra), the Shōdasa upachārās are completed.

THE CONDUCT

All the services offered to the Lord are performed by the priests by uttering the relevant formulae. The Lord is invoked by the chanting of Murti mantra and in a similar way, the other services are rendered one after the other. As the deity is bathed, the pancha suktās are chanted. The pañcha-suktās are five in number. They are

- a. Purusha suktam.
- b. Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa) suktam.
- c. Śrī suktam.
- d. Bhusuktam and
- e. Nīlāsuktam.

In great temples, there are Vedic scholars (paṇḍits), who chant the Vēdic mantrās. These suktās praise the manifold qualities of the cosmic being (purusha) Viṣṇu and his consorts Śrī Bhu and Neeḷā dēvi. The sacred bath (Tirumanjana) is followed up by offering of flowers and basil leaves. This is performed by the chanting of the thousand sacred names (Sahasra nāmas) of the lord.

BALIHARANA

The last phase of the 'archana' is characterised by a ceremony, called 'Baliharana'. The offering of a portion of the consecrated food to the spirits is called 'baliharana'. This ceremony is performed twice a day, that is at the close of the rituals in the morning as well as in the evening.

THE MIDDAY WORSHIP

The pilgrims have access to the Lord till about 11.30 A.M. Then it is time for 'ārādhana' and midday food-offering, which is known as "Rājabhōga." This consists of paṇihōra (seasoned tamarind rice) and other things. The food offering is distributed to the devotees, who are present there. Then the Lord is coaxed to take his after noon siesta.

About 2.00 PM, the deity once again is made to wake up by uttering the waking up formula. After this, the pilgrims are free to see the deity.

THE EVENING SERVICE

The priests commence the evening ritual by lighting the lamps. It is essentially the same as the morning ritual except the ablution of the Lord. The night food-offering consists of puḷihōra, fried gram, rice cakes, cooked rice with ghee and sugar and other things.

The evening worship is followed by the ceremony of putting the Lord to bed, which is known as 'śayanōtsava'. while the priests are busy with this ceremony, the lay devotees assembled in front of the frontal porch, sing songs in praise of the Lord. Finally the sacred 'teertham' and "prasādam" are distributed to the devotees, who assemble there. With this, the day's proceedings are finished and silence descends over the temple premises.

Special Services :

The visiting Pilgrims can institute a special service in their name and 'gōtra' by paying the prescribed fees. Thus, one often finds the services like the 'sahasranāmārchana', (the chanting of the thousand names of the Lord), Ashtōttaram (the chanting of the hundred and eight names of the Lord) and Tulasi and Kumkum Puja (worship by basil leaves and saffron). These services to the Lord are accompanied by utterances of the requisite formulae. The devotees can also ask for special services in the evening only like 'Aśwavāhanam' (riding on horse-vehicle by the Lord), Garuḍa vāhana, Hanumaṇṭa vāhana, and so on on payment of the prescribed fees. These vehicles (vāhanas) are dear to the Lord. The devotees, therefore, take pleasure to see the Lord sitting on these vehicles. (vahanās).

The festivals of the Lord

The conduct of the daily proceedings differs naturally

from the festivals (utsavas) of the Lord. It is firmly believed that the festivals are invigorating as strengthening the power of the God for bestowing the blessings upon the devotees. The sanskrit-word 'utsava' means removal of sorrow by the grace of the God. (savaḥ = sorrow; utu = (udhrutah) is removed). In order to prevent the sorrow of the man, the Āgama śāstrās prescribe the following utsavas.²⁹

- a. Nityōtsava (daily ceremony).
- b. Pakshōtsava (Fortnightly ceremony).
- c. Masōtsava (Monthly ceremony) and
- d. Varshōtsava (Annual festival).

Annual festival of the Lord

According to Pāñcharātra Āgamās, particularly in terms of Padmasaṃhita, which is widely current in Tēlaṅgāna area, the Pāñcharātra kalyaṇōtsava (celebration of the marriage of the Lord for five successive nights) is followed.³⁰

First day :

1. Svastivāchanam in the morning.
2. Aṅkurārpaṇa (the sowing of seeds) in the evening

Second day

1. Dhvajārōhaṇa (the hoisting of the flag with Garuḍa as emblem in the morning)
2. Bhērīpuja (worship of the instruments of music in the evening).
3. Dēvatāhvānam (Invitation to the gods).

Here thirty two gods are invited with mantrās, Rāgās, and Tālās.

4. **Mahā kumbha sthāpana**
(Invoking the God into a sacred vessel)
5. **Agni pratishṭha** (consecration of fire)

According to the Agni Pratishṭha, pañchāhnikam (five nights), saptāhnikam (seven nights), Navāhnikam (nine nights) and Dwādaśāhnikam (twelve nights) are followed.

6. **Kalyaṇam** (marriage) **Hōmam** and **Baliharana**.

Third day

Hōmam, Baliharana and sēvās.

Fourth day

Ratha bali - Rathōtsavam (Car festival)
(The pleasure ride of the Lord on the chariot)

Fifth day

MORNING

Purṇāhuti (the end of the fire sacrifice)

Avabhrita snānam

(the purification ceremony)

EVENING

Śrī pushpayāgam

Dēvatā utsarjana (sending off of the gods)

Ekānta sēva (Paramapada sēva)

Adhyayanotsavam

The Adhyayanōtsavam is generally celebrated for three days before the commencement of the "brahmōtsavās" (annual festival) of the Lord. It is celebrated in Dhanurmāsam in most of the temples. The recitation of Tamiḷ Divya prabandās takes place for the three days. On the third day, at night, the

paramapada utsava of Nammālvār, the celebrated saint of Vaishṇavas, takes place with pomp and pleasure. There is hardly any temple without an Ālvār and the recitation of Tamil prabandhās.

The birthdays of the twelve Ālvārs (Tirunakhatrās) are also celebrated in the temples, which follow pāñcharātra Āgamās.

PRAYER TO LORD NARASIMHASWAMY

The devotees Pray to Lord Narasimha in different Ways.

The Ashtāśya Nrisiṃha Maṅtra, which is being orally transmitted from person to person, is as follows.

“Namastē Nārasimhāya Gaṇḍabhēruda rupiṇē,
 Namastē Vyāghra rupāya Sarva duhkha nivāriṇē,
 Namō Vānara rupāya Sarva śatru nivāriṇē,
 Namō Vārāha rupāya Sarva Sampatpradāyinē,
 Namastē Aśva Vaktrāya Sarva Vidyā Pradāyinē,
 Namō Garuḍa rupāya duṣṭa Pannaga hāriṇē,
 Namō Bhalluka Vaktrāya Śatru Stambhana Kāriṇē,
 Ashtāśya Gaṇḍa bhēruṇḍā rupāya agni Prabhāyacha,
 Kalpānta kāla nirghōsha garjitā Yōgra rupiṇē,
 Dwātrimśat Kōṭihastāya dwātrimśāyudha dhāriṇē.”

If this ‘maṅtra’ is recited by a devotee after taking bath, daily, all his physical desires are fulfilled by the grace of Lord Narasimha,

There is an other ‘maṅtra’ which is known as ‘Śrī Nrisiṃha Dwādaśa nāma Stōtram’, which is as given below.²²

"Prathamantu mahā Jwālō,
 Dviteeyam tugra kēsaree,
 Triteeyam Vajra dāmshttrasēha,
 Chaturtham tu Viśāradah,
 Pañchamam Nārasimhāshcha,
 Shashtāh Kāshyapa mardanah,
 Saptamō Yātu hamtā scha,
 Ashtamō Dēva Vallabhah.
 Navāh Prahlāda Varadō,
 Dashamōgnānta hastakah,
 Ekādaśō mahā rudrō
 Dwādaśō dāruṇa stathā,
 Dwādaśaitāni nāmāni Nrisimhāsyā mahātmanah,
 Mantra rāja iti gnātam Sarva pāpa vināshanam."

If a devotee recites this mantra of the twelve names of the Lord, all his sins will be destroyed.

It is firmly believed that Prahlāda, an ardent devotee of the Lord, prayed to God with the following 'mantra', which is known as "Śrī Nrisimha Kavacham."³³

1. "Nrisimha Kavacham Vakshyē
 Prahlādē nōditam purā
 Sarva rakshā karam puṇyam
 Sarvō Padrava nāśanam.
2. Sarva saṃpat karam chaiva
 Swarga mōksha Pradāyakam
 Dhyātva Nrisimha dēvēśam
 Hēma Simhāsana sthitim.

3. Vivrutāsyam trinayanam
 Śara diṇḍu sama Prabham
 Lakshmyā liṅgita Vāmāṅgam
 Vibhutibhi rupāśritam.
4. Chatur bhujam Kōmalāṅgam
 Swarṇa Kuṇḍala Śōbhitam
 Urōja śōbhitō raskam
 Ratna Kēyura mudritam.

Śatairdivya Simham namāmi”.

There are 31 ślōkās (verses) in this Kavacham. If one recites this Kavacham after taking bath, daily, all his desires are fulfilled by the grace of the Lord.

It is widely believed that Ādi Śaṅkarācharya, the great prophet of Advaita Philosophy, prayed to Lord Narasimha with twenty two verses in Sanskrit, entitled ‘Lakshmi Narasimha Stōtram’ when he was in trouble.³⁴ These verses are being recited by the devotees, irrespective of caste or creed, even now to obtain the favour of the Lord. The first verse is as follows.³⁵

“Śrī matpayōnidhi nikētana chakra pāṇe,
 Bhōgeṇdra bhōga maṇi raṅjita puṇya murtē,
 Yōgeśa śāśvata śaranya bhavābdhi pōta,
 Lakshmi Nrisimha mama dēhi Karāvalambam.”

Besides chanting these ślōkas in praise of Lord Narasimha, describing him in various ways, there is also another way of worshipping the Lord by chanting the 108 and the 1000 names of Lord Narasimha, which are known as ‘Aṣṭōttara Śata nāma Stōtram’ and ‘Sahasra nāma Stōtram’ respectively. This type of worship of the Lord is generally followed in all the temples of Narasimha in Telāṅgāna.

List of the Tirumakshatras of Alvars and Vaishnava Acharyas

S. No.	Ālvār	Nakshatram	Tamil month	Telugu month	English month
1.	Pōygai	Śravaṇam	Tulā saṁkramaṇa	Kārtikam	November
2.	Pudattār	Dhanishṭha	Tulā saṁkramaṇa	Kārtikam	November
3.	Pēy Ālvār	Śatabhisham	Tulā saṁkramaṇa	Kārtikam	November
4.	Tirumālīśai	Magha	Makara māsam	Pushyam	January
5.	Nammālvār	Viśākha	Vriṣabha māsam	Vaiśākhā	May
6.	Madhurakavi	Chitta	Mēsha māsam	Vaiśākhā	May
7.	Kulaśékhara	Punarvasu	Kurūbha saṁkramaṇa	Phālguna	March
8.	Periālvār	Swāti	Mithuna saṁkramaṇa	Jyēsthā	June
9.	Āṇḍal	Pubba	Karkāṭaka saṁkramaṇa	Śrāvaṇa	August
10.	Toṇḍaraḍippōḍi	Jyēsthā	Dhanus saṁkramaṇa	Mārgaśīram	December
11.	Tiruppāṇi	Rōhiṇi	Vriṣchika saṁkramaṇa	Kārtika	November
12.	Tirumaṅgai	Krittika	Vriṣchika saṁkramaṇa	Kārtika	November

The birthdays of the following **Acharyas** are celebrated in the temples, of Viññu.

S. No.	Ālvār	Nakshatram	Tamiḻ month	Telugu month	English month
1.	Kurattālvār	Hastami	Makara māsam	Pushya māsam	January
2.	Maṇavāḷa mahāmuni	Mula	Tulā saṁkramaṇam	Kārtikam	November
3.	Udayavarulu (Rāmānuja)	Ārdra	Mesha māsam	Vaiśākhama	May
4.	Aḷavandar (Yāmanāchārya)	Uttarāshāḍa	Karkāṭaka saṁkramaṇa	Āshāḍham	July
5.	Nāthamuni	Anurāḍha	Mithuna saṁkramaṇa	Jyēshṭha	June
6.	Parāśara bhaṭṭar	Ānurāḍha	Vriṣhabha saṁkramaṇa	Jyēshṭha	June
7.	Vedānta Mahā Śrīke.	Śravaṇam	Tulā māsam	Āśvayujia	October

GENERAL FESTIVALS OBSERVED IN NRISIMHA TEMPLES THROUGHOUT THE TELUGU CALENDER YEAR (APRIL-MARCH) IN TELANGANA

The following festivals are celebrated during the Telugu Calender year from ugādi, the first day of Telugu Calender year onwards.

1. UGADI (April)

It is the first day of Telugu new year. The devotees visit the Lord in the evening. The Almanac is read out loudly predicting the future of the country and the impact of the movement of planets on the individuals. Men and women wearing new clothes, visit the temple along with their families. Some of them present cocoanuts and fruits etc to the priest for offering to the God. Then the sacred water, 'Teertha', 'śaṭha-kōpam' (the symbols of Vishnu's feet) and 'prasāda' (food) are offered to the devotees.

2. SRI RAMA NAVAMI (APRIL)

It falls on Chaitra śuddha Navami with Punarvasu nakshatram. This festival is of much importance to the temples of Rāma. It is usually celebrated in the temples of Narasimha also.

3. NARASIMHA JAYANTI (MAY)

The Narasimha Jayanti festival is the most important festival in Narasimha temples, which occurs on the 14th day of the first half of the month of Vaiśākha with Svāti nakshatram (natal constellation obtaining at the time of birth of Lord Narasimha svāmy). The special feature of this festival is the conduct of the evening ritual of the Lord. The proceedings of the morning are as usual, but the 'Rājabhōga' is postponed to the night. The evening ritual starts with dusk. The offering of

'dhupa', 'dīpa' and 'naivēdya' takes place. In some temples recitation of purāṇa and Harikatha of the birth of Narasimha take place. The devotees are on fast till they take sacred water, and food, after the 'naivēdya' to the Lord. The low and high, rich and poor, and men and women visit the temple to attend the special function arranged on that occasion.

4. HANUMAN JAYANTI (MAY)

The birth day of Hanumān, who is a well known devotee of Rama and Narasimha, is celebrated on Vaiśākha bahuḷa Daśami with purvā-bhādra nakshtram.

5. TOLI EKADASI (JULY)

It falls on Āshāḍha Śuddha Ekādaśi, on which most of the people are on fast and visit the temple to take the 'darśan' of the Lord.

6. SRI KRISHNA JAYANTI (KRISHNASHTAMI) AUGUST

This festival, which celebrates the birth day of Lord Krishna, falls on Ashtami with Rōhiṇi nakshtram of the first part of the month of Śrāvaṇa. This festival is befittingly celebrated particularly in the Krishna temples. However, this festival is also celebrated in all the temples of Narasimha. As the festival of Nrisimha Jayanti, Śrī Krishna Jayanti is celebrated when night falls. The night ritual starts at 7.00 P.M. The devotees are on fast till they receive "Teertham" and "Prasādam" from the temple in the night. Special worship is done to the Lord on that day: On the next day, to glorify Lord Śrī Krishna's child hood pranks, a festival called 'uṭlōtsava' is celebrated. This is the festival in which almost all the people of the village participate with eclat and enthusiasm. After this carnival, milk is offered to the Lord and then it is distributed among the participants.

7. VIJAYADASHIMI AND NAVARATROTSAVAS (October)

The festival of Śamī puja occurs on the Vijayadaśami, the tenth day of the first half of the month of Āśvayuja. The importance of the festival is known all over India. This day is considered to be the most auspicious, on which many ancient Hindu kings launched their victorious campaigns (Digvijayātra). It is the day which is reckoned with the pandavas, who got back their weapons from the 'śamī' tree, where they hid them before they went incognito and worshipped their weapons praying for success in their efforts. Since then, this day has been marked for the worship of weapons (Āyudha pūja) and the śamī tree. On this day the utsava image of the Lord along with his consorts with regal attire is conducted on a chosen vehicle to the śamī tree, which is often planted outside of the village in an open place. Then the śamī tree is worshipped and the leaves of the tree are showered over the Lord and then distributed among the devotees, who assemble there. The Lord on the vehicle is taken around the village, so that all the people have the access to have the 'darśan' of the Lord. All the Hindus wearing new clothes pay their respects to the Lord either in the temple, before or after the procession of the Lord or during the procession of the Lord through the streets of the village or town.

The Navarātra utsavas commencing from Vijayadaśami, are conducted for the glory of Lakshmi (or Ādiśakti) for nine days in the month of Āśvayuja. These Navarātra utsavas are being celebrated in some temples only.

8. DEEPĀVALI (November)

This is the festival of lights and crackers, which is celebrated on Āshvayuja Bahuḷa chaturdaśī. It is believed that Śrī kṛiṣṇa and his consort, Satyabhāma had killed Naraka, a powerful demon, in the battle in the early hours of this day. The temple and all the houses are decorated with oil-lamps or

with candles some times. Electricity adds its lustre in illuminating the temple and its premises attracting the devotees to pay a visit to the temple. After wearing the new clothes, the devotees along with members of their family, visit the temple and pay their respects to the Lord.

9. VAIKUNTHA EKĀDAŚI (Mukkōti Ekādaśi) - January

This holy festival of great merit occurs on pushya suddha Ekādaśi. The devotees after bathing in 'kōneru' or river early in the morning take the 'darśan' of the Lord sitting on a vehicle (Vāhana) at the entrance of the temple. There is no second thought to the believers and the devotees that the visit to the Lord on that day is spiritually auspicious and it brings spiritual merit to them. If one enters the temple through a particular door, which is exclusively opened on that day for the devotees and visiting pilgrims and takes the 'darśan' of the Lord, it is like entering into paramapada (permanent abode) of the Lord. It is intensely believed that one goes to paramada after his death as the result of his visit the Lord through a particular entrance of the temple. On all other days, the doors of the particular entrance, will remain closed in the temple.

10. KĀRTIKA POURNIMA (November)

This festival of holy bath early in the morning in a kōneru or a sacred river and worshipping the Lord occurs on the full moon day of the month of Kārtika. On that day the Hindus take bath with the substance of 'usiri kāya'.

11. DHANURMĀSAM (15th December-14th January)

The Dhanurmāsotsava celebrates the famous meditation of Āṇḍāl, who was the consort of Lord. The Dhanurmāsa

is a Saurāyana (Solar movement), which is followed still in Tamiḷnāḍu. This Tamil month occurs during the months of Mārgaśīra and Pushya. The thirty days of the meditation of Āṇḍāl are celebrated by a special ritual in early morning every day. On each day a pāśura (a verse) from the 'Tirup-pāvu' which is the work of Āṇḍāl Herself, is recited by the priests.

12. NARASIMHA DWADASI (March)

This festival is celebrated on phālguna śuddha dwādasi.

People visit the temple for the 'darśan' of the Lord on this day.

13. HOLI (Kāma dahana) – March

This festival occurs on the full moon day in the month of Phālguna. According to the tradition, this ceremony is connected with the purāṇic story of the burning of cupid (kāma dahana) by Lord Śiva. On this day also people visit the temple.

Generally the people visit the temple on Fridays and Saturdays, irrespective of months, to worship the Lord. After the eclipse, a special rite is performed in the temple for purification.

Temples are the important centres, where different people get together to witness the ceremonies on the eve of the festivals without any distinction of caste or creed. These promote for the growth of the cult and help for the spread and popularity of the cult general.

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CHAPTER VI

ICONOGRAPHY

Generally the iconographic forms of god Narasimha popular in Telangāṇa are Giriḡa, Yōga, Sthauna and Lakshmi Narasimha, which have the sanction of the Āgama Śāstras. They may be divided as Sthanaka (standing), Āsana (seated), Yānaka (riding) and Nrīta (dancing).¹ The various forms of Narasimha are not mentioned clearly in his book "Elements of Hindu Iconography" by T. A. Gōpīnātha Rao. He mentions only three types of images namely Giriḡa, Sthauna and Yānaka and does not bring out the difference between Giriḡa Narasimha and Yōga Narasimha. He states that there are few other varieties, whose descriptions are not found in the Sanskrit authorities available to us. All the forms of Narasimha, as mentioned above, have been found in the sculptures under study. Besides, other forms of Narasimha can be seen in the sculptures during the period of study in Telangāṇa. They are :

- a. Kēvalā Lakshmi Narasimha
(Standing Narasimha along with his consort, Lakshmi, seated on his waist),
- b. Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha
(Narasimha in yōga with Lakshmi).
- c. Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha and
- d. Narasimha in Hari - Hara aspects.

The forms of Narasimha, as mentioned above, have no sanction of the Āgama Śāstras. A general noteworthy feature of the sculptures of Nārasimha is that in early medieval repre-

sentation the lion-face is natural and later on it is stylized. According to the examples available, the forms of Narasimha are given below and in some instances, the texts are quoted.

S. No.	Type of Sculpture	Total No. of available Sculptures		
1.	Kēvala Narasimha (Standing)	...	...	12
2.	Girija Narasimha (Seated)	...	...	9
3.	Yōga Narasimha	...	...	6
4.	Sthauna Narasimha	...	...	7
5.	Lakshmī Narasimha	...	...	22
6.	Ugra Narasimha	...	...	4
7.	Kēvala Lakshmi Narasimha	...	...	1
8.	Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha	...	...	1
9.	Varāha Lakshmī Narasimha	...	...	1
10.	Yānaka Lakshmī Narasimha	...	...	1
11.	Narasimha in Hari-Hara aspects	...	...	1
12.	Panchamukha Narasimha	...	...	1
13.	Tāṇḍava (Nritta) Narasimha	...	...	1
14.	Formless or No fixed form images	...	...	20

It is known from the survey of select temples of Narasimha in Telangāṇa region that there are eighty seven images and sculptures of Narasimha, belonging to the type mentioned above.

An interesting feature of iconography of Narasimha is that during the period of study, the Lord is known by various names in Telangāṇa. They are :

1. Aghōra Narasimha Swāmy
2. Gajagiri Lakshmi Narsimha Swāmy
3. Gaṇḍabhērūṇḍa Narasimha Swāmy

4. Hari-Hara Jvāla Narasimha Swamy
5. Jvāla Narasimha Swāmy
6. Kapila Narasimha Swāmy
7. Lakshmi Narasimha Nārāyaṇa Dēvara
8. Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy
9. Limādri Narasimha Swāmy
10. Matsayagiri Narasimha Swāmy
11. Nambulādri Narasimha Swāmy
12. Narasimha Swāmy
13. Panchamūkha Narasimha Swāmy
14. Prasanna Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy
15. Ugra Nrasimha Swāmy
16. Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy
17. Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy and
18. Yōgānanda Narasimha Swāmy
19. Doppa Narasimha Swāmy.

The different names of god Narasimha, as mentioned above, are even now popular in Telangāṇa. The description of the select centres of Narasimha worship is given in Chapter IV of this book

1. Kevala Narasimha

The Vaikhānasa Āgama describes the single images of Narasimha, who has two or four arms.² Regarding the number of hands Kalpana S. Dēśai says³ that "the early images of Nrisimha are two handed, but as the cult expanded the iconography became complex, growing into multiple hands".

The single standing image of Narasimha is called **Kēvala Narasimha** :

This type of images are found at the following places.

1. Śanigaram - Karīmānagar district.
 - a. Temple on the hill
 - b. Temple in the village
2. Nallagonḍa, Tq. Sircilla, Karīmānagar district.
3. Nāmpalli, Tq. Sircilla, Karīmānagar district.
4. Rāmāyampēṭ, Medak district.
5. Peddireḍḍigūḍa, Nalgonda district.
 - a. Sculpture on the rock
 - b. Metal image
6. Mānikbandār, Nizāmābād district.
7. Sultānbazar, Hyderabad.
8. Old Kabutarkhana, Hyderabad.
9. Jeera, Secunderabad.
10. Yādagiriguṭṭa Nalgonda District.

Out of the ten images mentioned above, the first six are of black granite and the remaining are of copper. The first five are sculptured on the rocks in the temples in bold relief and the remaining are separate images consecrated and installed inside the sanctum sanctorum of the temples. The last one is made of silver. All the images are in standing posture. All the images have makutas and they have four hands, except S. No. 1, 5 and 9, which have two hands only. The images at S. No. 5 (b), 7, 8, and 9 are of copper metal and the remaining, including at S. No. 5 (a), are of black stone.

2. Girija Narasimha

The word "girija" means one born out of a mountain. The conception underlying the name of Girija Narasimha is

that the lion comes out of a mountain-cave.⁴ The Śilparatna says that "the seated image of Narasimha may have either two or four hands.⁵ The Padma Samhita describes the Lord of this type.⁶ "His face is that of a lion and the body of a human being. He has three eyes and a kirīṭa makuṭa. He has four hands. His face looks fierce." The Viṣṇudharmōttaram says⁷ that "the Lord should be represented as seated on a Simhāsana with his feet resting on the ground. He should hold Śankha, Chakra, gada and Padma in his hands. His hair is flamboyant." This type of images may be found at the following places.

1. Dharmapuri, Karīmānagar district.
 - a. Old (pāta) Narasimha Swāmy temple
 - b. New (kotta) Narasimha Swāmy temple
2. Gurrālagondi, Medak district
3. Arvapalli, Nalgonda district.
4. Mattapalli, Nālgonḍa disirict
5. Yādagiriguṭṭa, Nalgonda district
6. Bālkonḍa, Nizāmābād district
7. Jānakampēt, Nizāmābād district
8. Urugonḍa (on the hill), Warangal district

All these images mentioned above, are of black stone. The images at S.No. 4, 5 and 8 are carved on the rocks in the temples and the remaining are loose images, installed in the sanctum of the temples. All these images are in sitting posture. The images at S.No. 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 are seated in Padmāsana and the remaining images sitting on a pedestal, hang their legs down. All the images except at S.No. 2 and 4 have "makutas" on their heads. All the images have four hands except at S.No. 2, which has only two hands, folded together in "anjali mudra". All the images except at S.No. 2 hold "chakras" in their upper right hands and the "śankhas" are in the upper left

hands and the lower right and left hands are stretched forward and supported on the knees, except at S.No. 2 and 6. The right hands of the latter are in "abhaya mudra" and the left hands are stretched forward and supported on the left knees.

3. Yoga Narasimha

The Vaikhānasa Āgama describes the single images of Narasimha as the Kēvala Narasimha, who has either two or four arms. Girija Narasimha, another variety of the single image Narasimha, should be shown as seated on a Padmāsana in the "utkuṭika" posture, the four legs being supported in the position by the Yōga paṭṭa.⁸ There is no clear-cut description of Yōga Narasimha in any available Āgamasāstras. The Lord, when maintaining his legs in the required position by yōga-paṭṭa belt with two or four hands, is generally known as Yōga Narasimha. T.A. Gōpinātha Rao states that Narasimha seated with yoga-paṭṭa around his legs is commonly found in the South rather than in the North.⁹ This type of sculptures are found at the following places in Telangāṇa during the period of study.

1. Mēḍipalli, Karīmīnagar district.
2. Ālampur, Mahabubnagar district.
 - a. Narasimha Swāmy temple
 - b. Trimurti Sannidhi (Bāla Brahmēśvara Temple)
3. Vaḷdemānu (Vardhamānapuram), Mahabubnagar district.
4. Narasimlapēṭ, Warāṅgal district.
5. Brāhmana Wāḍa, Hanmakonda, Warāṅgal district.

All the images are of black stone and they are independent images, installed in the sanctum of the temples. The image at S.No.3 is kept in the local museum at Vardhamānapuram of

Mahābubnagar district. All these images are in sitting posture and they have Yōgapaṭṭa belts going round the knees. All the images have four hands and they hold "chakras" in their upper right hands and the "śankhas" are in the upper left hands and the lower right hands and left hands are stretched forward and supported on the knees. The images at S.No. 2(a) 3 and 5 wear rings to the wrists and arms and armlets to the legs. The image at S.No. 1 has a "halo" round the head. The accessory images are found at the images of S.No. 1 and 3. The former has Prahlada and the latter has two lady-attendants, each one side standing. The last image at S.No. 5 is known as Doppa Narasimha Swāmy.

4. Sthauna Narasimha

The conception underlying the name of Sthauna Narasimha is that the lion in this case comes out of a pillar. The word 'Sthauna' came from the word 'Sthuna', which means a column. As the god came out of a column, when it was broken in anger, he is known as Sthauna Narasimha.¹⁰ The image may have twelve or sixteen hands and there should be three bends in the body (Tribhanga). On the left thigh there of, Hiraṇyakaśipu should stretched out with the belly being ripped open by the two of the hands of Narasimha. One of the right hands should be in the "abhaya mudra" and the another has to carry a sword. One of the left hands of Narasimha should hold the "makuta" of Hiraṇyakaśipu and another should be shown as lifted up for administering a blow to the demon. The legs of the 'asura' (demon) are to be taken hold of by a right hand and two other hands, one right and one left should be lifted up to the ears of the image and be holding the drawnout entrails of Hiraṇyakaśipu in the form of a garland. The figure of Hiraṇyakaśipu should be sculptured to kill his opponent. As if to appease the highly excited wrath of Narasimha while engaged in destroying this demon, Śrīdēvi, Bhudēvi, Nārada and Prahlada with his hands in the 'anjali' pose, should all be shown

as standing on his right and left. Above these, should be sculptured Indra and the other lōkapālas with their hands in the 'anjali' pose. If the figure of Hiranyakaśipu is sculptured with only eight hands, two of them should be employed in tearing open the belly of Hiranyakaśipu, while four others should carry Śankha, the gada, the chakra and the Padma. The remaining two should be holding the drawn out entrails of Hiranyakaśipu garland-wise.¹¹

When Nṛasimha is depicted in the action of tearing out the entrails of Hiranyakaśipu, he is called Sthauna Narasimha. This type of images can be found at the following places.

1. Kōyilkoṇḷa, Mahabubnagar District.
2. Māmiḷḷapalle, „
3. Kāsarhaṭṭa, Chārmīnar, Hyderābād.
4. Old Kabutarkhāna, Chārminar, Hyderābād,

There is a sculpture on a stone, which is above the door leading to the sanctum of the temple.

5. Kingsway, Secunderābād.
6. Dumpeta, Karīmṇagar district
7. Ālampur, Mahabubnagar district.

There is a loose sculpture in the Bāla Brahmēśvara temple (Trimurti Sannidhi).

A= the images, except at S.No. 5, which is of white marble stone, are of black stone. The last sculpture has sixteen hands and it is 3 feet in height. In all the images, the demon is stretched across the lap of the Lord. The Lord at S.No. 1, 2, 3 and 5 is seated in Padmāsana and the Lord at S.No. 4 and 7 is seated on a pedestal, hanging down his legs freely. All the images, except the last, have four heads. The

last image has sixteen arms. The Lord holds Chakra in his upper right hand and the Śankha in his upper left hand. The lower hands, left and right, are in action ripping open the bosom of the demon. The images at S.No. 1,2,3,5 and 7 are loose sculptures, installed in the sanctum of the temples. The last image is installed in the circumambulatory passage to the north-east of Bālā Brahmēśvara temple at Ālampur of Mahabubnagar district. All these images have "makutas." The image at S No. 5 has thick mane, lolling tongue, sharp curved teeth, Puffed up cheeks and rolling eyes. The images at S.No. 1,3,6 and 7 have open mouths and the images at S.No. 1,3, and 4 have lolling tongues and rolling eyes, The image at S.No. 6 is on a hillock at Dūmpeṭa, Meṭpalli Taluk in Karimnagar district. The image at S.No. 3 has prominent canine teeth. The Lord at S.No. 1 and 7 has open eyes and he wears "hāras" and rings to the wrists and arms. At S No. 7, the accessory images of Prahlāda with folded hands in "aṅjalimudra" and Garuḍa, seated on his Knee, are on either side of the Lord.

5. Lakshmi Narasimha

The fifth variety of Narasimha is called Lakshmi Narasimha, because godeess Lakshmi is found on the lap of god Narasimha. Skanda Purāṇa, Nāradiya Mahāpurāṇa and Rupadhyāna Ratnāvaḷi describe god Narasimha seated with Lakshmi in his lap. The Skanda Purāṇa says that "Narasimha has a calm appearance when he is embracing his consort, Lakshmi. He holds "Chakra" and "dhanas". His eyes are like the Sun and the Moon. His hands are extended to the knees. He is seated on a lotus of thirty two petals".¹²

On the other hand Naradiya Mahapurana portrays rather fierce aspect of Lakshmi Narasimha. "Lakshmi, holding a lotus in her hand, is embraced by Narasimha. The god wears a garland of entrails and Yagnōpavīta, made of a serpent. He has five faces and each face has three eyes."¹³

Country to the Naradiya Mahapurana, Rupadhāyana Ratnāvali gives a beautiful account of Lakshmi Narasimha. It says that "god Lakshmi Narasimha, is white like the Moon. He has the face of a lion, great body and eyes like the Lotus-flowers. He is embraced by his consort, Lakshmi. The Lord has four hands. He holds Chakra and Śankha in his upper right hand and upper left hand respectively, while his lower right hand is in "abhaya mudra" and the left is "Varada" posture.¹⁴ T. A. Gopinatha Rao gives a beautiful account of Lakshmi Narasimha. He says¹⁵ that "in this aspect Narasimha is seated upon a Padmāsana with his left leg hanging down and the left leg bent and made to rest flat upon the seat. On the lap so formed by the bent leg, Lakshmi is seated with both her legs hanging down and each of the feet of Lakshmi is seen to be supported as a lotus. The upper right hand of Narasimhā holds the Chakra, while the lower right hand is in the "abhaya pose". The upper left carries the Śankha and the lower left hand embraces the goddess. The right hand of Lakshmi is taken round the body of Narasimha in embrace and her left hand holds a lotus in it."

This is the most popular form of Narasimha in Telangana. This type of images are found at the following places :

1. Kālva, Ādilābād district
2. Śamshābād, Rangā Reddy district.
3. Ibrahimpāṭṇam
4. Khammam town, Khammam district
5. Narasimlapalle (Nandagiri - kōṭla), Karīmṇagar district.
6. Bejjanki, Karīmṇagar district.
7. Nimmanapalle , ,
8. Pulluru, Medak district.
9. Mahabubnagar town, Mahabubnagar district

10. Vāḍapalli (Wazirābād), Nalgonda district.
11. Yādagirigutta, Nalgonda district
12. Thānāgali, Nizāmābād town, Nizāmābād district
13. Chukkāpur, Nizāmābād district.
14. Kommāla, Waraṅgal district.
15. Koḍavaṭancha (Kōtancha), Waraṅgal district.
16. Varadannapēt, Waraṅgal district
17. On a hillock near Bhadrakali temple, Hanmakonda town, Waraṅgal district.
18. Ingurti (Village temple), Waraṅgal district.
19. Vēlupukonda (Zafargāh), Waraṅgal district
20. Ahōbila Maṭh, Bāgh Amberpēt, Hyderābād.
21. Narsing Mandir, Bēgambazār, Hyderabad.
22. Narsimha Mandir, Mahankāli Street, Secunderābād, Hyderābād district.

According to the list mentioned above the images at S. No. 2, 21 and 22 are of copper metal and the remaining images are of black stone. The images at S. No. 3, 7, 11, 17 and 19 are carved on the rocks in the 'sanctum' of the temples and the remaining images are loose sculptures. All the images are in sitting posture. The images at 7, 15, 19, 21 are seated in Padmāsana Pose and the remaining images hang their right legs down and fold their left legs, where Lakshmi is seated. It is general Phenomena that Lakshmi is seated on the left lap of the Lord. All the images have 'makuta', and four hands. The images at S. No. 3, 6, 7, 15 and 20 have mane, spread on their shoulders. The Lord at S. No. 9 is seated on the coil of Śeṣha and the Lord at S. No. 6 and 20 has serpent's hood on his head. The description of these images is given in detail in the fourth chapter of the book.

3. Ugra Narasimha

Besides the five forms of Narasimha, described so far,

there is an other form, which is called Ugra Narasimha. It is also a popular form of Narasimha in Telangāṇa. The description of the Lord in this form is given in the Matsya Purāṇa, Narsimha Purāṇa, Nāradiya Mahā Purāṇa, Nārāyaṇīyam and Śrīmadāṇḍhra Bhāgavatam of Bammara Pōtana.

Matsya Purāṇa says¹⁶ that "shining like the Sun and the Moon, the Lord assumed the form of Narasimha"

According to Narasimha Purāṇa,¹⁷ "when the king of demons Hiranya kaśipu hit the Pillar with his sword, it broke and fell down. Narasimha (Man-lion) came out of it and spread for many yōjanas. He was extremely furious and he had a great body, which was fearful to look at. He had big eyes, wide face and mouth, sharp curved teeth and broad shoulders. His claws were very big and the legs were wide. His face was shining like the flame of a volcano. His appearance was fierce."

The Nāradiya Mahā Purāṇa also portrays a fierce aspect of Lakshmi Narasimha. According to it,¹⁸ "the Lord wears a garland of entrails and a Yagnōpavita, made of a serpent. Ten hands forming a circle hold rosary, mace, lotus, conch-shell, bow, pestle, discus, sword and arrow."

Besides, Nārāyaṇīyam gives an account of the fearful aspect of Narasimha.¹⁹ The Lord had red rolling eyes and his thick mane stood straight. He stretched out and curled up his tongue and his prominent canine teeth came out. His mouth was a like terrible cave and he shone with supernatural fearful aspects."

Bammara Pōtana, a famous Telugu Poet, describes the fearful aspect of Narasimha thus,²⁰ "the flames coming out of the five faces of the Lord surrounded the earth and the heaven. His claws shone like a flash and he has terrible prominent canine teeth".

When the Lord is in awful form, he is called Ugra Narasimha. The images of this kind are found at the following places.

- a. Bhaisa (Bhainsa), Ādilābād district.
- b. Nāchāram, Medak district.
- c. Malluru, Warangal district. and
- d. Nālābazār Secunderabad, Hyderabad district.

The four images, mentioned above, are of black stone. The last image is a loose Sculpture and the remaining are sculptured on the rocks in the sanctum of the temples. The first two images are in sitting pose, (Girija Narasimha) and the last two in standing pose (Kēvala Narasimha). The height of the images, according to the serial order of the list, mentioned above, is 1 1/2', 1 1/2', 7' and 2' respectively. All the four images have four arms and pointed makutas. In all the four images, Śankha and Chakra are in the upper hands of the Lord. All these images have protruding eyes, open mouths and lolling tongues and the last two images have puffed up cheeks and prominent teeth. The image of the Lord at S. No. 3 is the known tallest image not only in Telangana, but also in Andhra Pradesh. It has thick mane, spread on the shoulders and bulging ears. The head is disproportionately large compared to the body of the image. The waist of the Lord is 8 inches in breadth and the mouth is widely opened. The length of the legs is about 3 feet each.

All these features, mentioned above, give him a fierce look. Hence the Lord is known as Ugra Narasimha Swamy. The prayer to this Lord, in awful form, is given in "Narasimhōttara tāpinyupanishat"²¹ and Mahā Nārāyaṇa Upanishat.²²

It is widely believed that if ugra form of Narasimha is

worshipped. one will get victory over his opponent either in a war or in a personal conflict. We find a reference to this effect in Agnipurāṇa.²³ Thus, the ugra form of Narasimha, if properly worshipped, bestows blessings on His devotees and fulfills their desires.

7. Kevala Lakshmi Narasimha

This image, which is of white marble stone, is installed in the sanctum of Pārik Mandir, Kōlsewāḍi, Begum bazar, Hyderābād.²⁴ The Lord is in standing posture along with his consort, Lakshmi, who is seated on the waist of the Lord. This is a rare image of Narasimha available to us.

8. Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimha

The combination of "Yōga" and "Bhōga" (seated Lakshmi on the lap) is very rare. We find a number of sculptures depicting god Narasimha in Yōga posture and with goddess Lakshmi separately. But we have a rare sculpture of god Narasimha, seated with his consort, Lakshmi, is in Yōga posture. This is a very rare combination of the image of Narasimha available to us.

This type of image of Yōgānanda Lakshmi Narasimha is in the cave of a hillock, near Bheemgal village of Nizāmābād district.²⁵ This image is of block stone. The Lord is in Yōga posture alongwith Lakshmi, who is seated on his lap. The Lord has four arms, open mouth and lolling tongue. He wears a "makuta." He is in sitting posture. This types of sculpture may be seen on a pillar in the Raṅgamaṇḍapa of the Lower Ahōbilam temple, Kurnool district.

9. Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha

According to the available examples god Narasimha in this aspect has the mouth of a Varāha (boar) and Lakshmi is seated on his left lap. This type of images of Narasimha are rare. In

the texts of iconography, it is known as Bhuvarāha. But the following sculpture is popularly known as Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha Swāmy.

This type of image of the Lord is in the garbhagriha (cave) of the temple on a hillock, near Nāgulavancha village of Khammam district.²⁶ A similar sculpture of Varāha Lakshmi Narasimha can be seen on a pillar in the Raṅga maṇḍapa of Narasimha temple at Lower Ahōbilam Kurnool district.

10. Yanaka Lakshmi Narasimha

Vaikhānasagama describes the images of this type as, "Narasimha in this aspect be seated upon the shoulders of Garuḍa (the divine vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu) or upon the coils of Ādisēsha. He should have four arms and carry Śankha and Chakra. He should be fully ornamented. Over the head of Narasimha, there should be the five-headed hood of Ādisēsha, held like an umbrella."²⁷

This is a rare sculpture, which is a presiding deity, installed in the sanctum of the temple (Lakshmi Narasimha Mandir) at Mārwaḍi basti, Dēgambazār, Hyderābād city.²⁸ The image of the Lord is of marble stone. The Lord is seated on Garuḍa (Kite vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu). He hangs down his legs freely. His consort, Lakshmi is seated on his left lap. The Lord has four arms. He holds 'gada' in his upper right hand and 'chakra' in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in 'Varada hasta' and his lower left hand holding the conch, is around the waist of his consort, Lakshmi. The Lord looks graceful.

Similarly, a sculpture of Yānaka Narasimha may be seen on a pillar in the Western Tiruchuṭṭumāla (cloister) of the Simhāchalam temple, Viśākhapaṭṇam district.

11. Narasimha in Hari-Hara Aspects

God Narasimha has certain aspects of Hari and Hara

(Vishṇu and Śiva). No text or iconography mention this type of images of Naraśimha. But we have the epigraphic evidence about Hari-Hara aspects. The first Ślōka about the Hari-Hara form of Viṣṇu and Śiva comes from the Maṇḍasor inscription from the time Kumāra Gupta I.²⁸

This is a very rare sculpture with composite features of Hari and Hara. This image is to the north-east in the circumambulatory passage of Bāla Brahmēśvara temple at Ālampur in Mahabubnagar district. It is 1 1/2 ft. in height, facing south. This is a syncretic image combining the Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite symbols. This is an unique image. The image of deity is carved on a black stone. The Lord is standing on a Pedestal. He has the head of a lion and human body. His right leg, raising up, is in "Agnigūḍam". He stands on his left leg firmly, which is straight. He has four hands. He holds "Chakra" in his upper right hand and "Triśūla" in his upper left hand. His lower right hand is in "Jñānamudra" and the left hand is in "abhaya mudra", holding 'Bilvadaḷa'. He has thick mane around his neck, falling on the chest. He is in man-lion (Naraśimha) form. The striking feature of the Lord is the absence of "Kirīṭa-makūṭa" on his head. He has a phālanētra on his fore head. He has rolling eyes, puffed up cheeks and an open mouth with prominent teeth. His ears stand erect. All these aspects give a fierce look. He wears "Makara Kuṇḍala" and "Nāga Kuṇḍala" on his right and left ears respectively. Besides, the Lord wears several ornaments. He wears "hāras", "kankaṣas", anklets and certain ornaments on his houlders. He wears certain ornaments and a piece of cloth to his waist. There are four figures below his arms. On the right side of the Lord is "Surya" (Sun) and below him is Vighnēśvara (Vināyaka). Mahishāsura Mardini is to his left and below her is Ambika (Pārvati).

12. Panchamukha Naraśimha

Nāradya Mahāpurāṇa, Rupadhyaṇa Ratnāvali, Āndhra

Mahābhāgavatam and **Narasimha Stavarājah** describe the god **Narasimha**. According to **Nāradya Mahāpurāṇa**, the Lord has five faces adorned with the moon-crest and each face has three eyes. The Lord has ten arms.²⁹

Rupadhyana Ratnāvali portrays rather a fierce aspect of the form of **Narasimha**.³⁰ It describes that "the god is very furious with five faces. He wears a garlānd of the **Kapālas** (skulls) and other 'hāras', made of a serpent. He has five faces adorned with the moon-creat and each face has three eyes. His eastern face is red, southern black, western white, northern yellow and his upper face has different colours. The Lord has ten hands.

Bammera Pōtana, a famous poet, who wrote **Bhāgavatam** in Telugu, describes the fearful aspect of **Narasimha** thus³¹ "the flames, coming out of the five faces of the Lord, surrounded the earth and the heaven."

According to **Narasimha Stavarājah**, the god in this form has five faces and wears a "Sarpa Yagnōpavīta" and a "munḍa-māla" (small beads).³²

This type of sculpture (**Sthauna Narasimha**) is on a big boulder, standing on the roof of the cave-temple of **Lakshmi Narasimha** at **Narasimlapalle** (**Nandagiri-kōṭṭa**) in **Karīmṇagar** district. It is 6 feet in height. It has five heads, side by side and sixteen hands. The demon, **Hiraṇyakaśipu** is stretched across the lap of the Lord. He has open mouth and wears a **makuta**, **hāras** and rings to the wrists and and arms. The Lower hands, left and right, are in action ripping open the bosom of the demon. The accessory images of **Ānjanēya** and **Prahlāda** are standing with folded hands near the Lord. The description of the image is given in detail else where.³³

A similar sculpture with ten hands and five faces can be seen on a pillar in the south cloister of the **Simhāchalam**

temple, Viśākhapaṭṇam district. Here the Lord stands on a padmapīṭham, having five faces, of these four are visible. The three faces of the Lord are side by side in a row. Of these heads, the fourth head is exactly above the middle head. Though the four heads of the Lord are distinct from outside, there is a presumption that the Lord has five faces, as mentioned above in the Rupadhyana Ratnāvli. The Narasimha Stavarāja calls this figure "Vīra Narasimha."⁸⁴

13. Tandava (NRITTA) Narasimha

The last type of available images of Narasimha is Tāndava (Nritta) Narasimha, which has no sanction of the Āgamaśāstras. This type of sculpture is very rare and it is not found in the Narasimha temples, under study.

This sculpture is on the lintel of the entrance leading to the antarala of Vishṇu temple of "Trikūṭa", popularly known as thousand pillared temple at Hanmakonda proper of Warngal district. It is about 2 feet in height, facing the North. Under a makara torana, devotees and musicians are attending to the Lord, on either side. Narasimha, in dancing posture, is standing on a flower-pedestal with his right leg bent at the knee and the left leg is lifted up, bent at the knee towards the right and toes resting on the calf muscle of the right leg. The god slightly bends his head to the right. The Lord has eight arms. From the top, his hands hold "Cakra" sword and "gada" and the front hand is raised up in "abhaya mudra." Similarly "śankhā" and a shield are in the first two left hands from the top and the third hand is hanging across. The lower left hand, bending at the arm, is holding a round-object. The Lord has a stylised mane, bulging eyes, puffed up cheeks, erected ears and an open mouth with the tongue curled up. He wears a round and tall makuta,

“nāmam”, “Yagnōpavitā”, necklace, “hāras”, armlets, wristlets, “udarabandha” and anklets. He is clad from the waist to the knees. Below his right hand, Garuḍa is kneeling with folded hands. To his back, two women devotees are standing with hands in ‘arjali mudra’ and a standing woman in dancing posture is seen, who is probably playing on certain instrument. Below his left arm, two devotees with folded hands are standing. Behind them is a woman, who is playing on “Maddela”, with her two hands. On either side of the Lord, to the extreme left and right, two chauri bearers, each one side, are standing in the service of the former.

Similarly there is a sculpture of Nṛtta Murti (Tandava Narasimha) on a pillar in the mukhamāṇḍapa of the main shrine of Kalyāṇa Vēṅkatēswara temple at Nārāyaṇavanam of Chittōre.

14. Formless or no Fixed form Images of Narasimha

Besides the above varieties, Lord Narasimha is worshipped at the following places. The deity has no fixed form. The mouth, eyes, head, Śankha, chakra, goddess Lakshmi, “three nāmas” of Śrīvaiṣṇavite caste-marks and other symbols partially or wholly are believed to be the form of Lakshmi Narasimha or Narasimha Swāmy. The deity is identified with one or more of these symbols on a loose stone or on the rock of a hillock or a hill,

1. Kālva (temple at the foot of the hillock), Ādilabad.
2. Sipliganj, Hussain Ālam, Chārmīnar, Hyderābād City.
3. Mustakpura (Kummarivāḍi), Hyderābād City.
4. Chaitanyapuri Golony (on the hillock), Hyderābād City.
5. Yelgandal; Karīmṇagar district.
6. Taṅgellapalli, Karīmṇagar district.

7. Chērlāpur, Karīmṇagar district,
8. Khammam town (on the hill), Khammam district.
9. Nāgulavancha, Khammam district.
10. Kōyilkōṇḍa (on the hill), Mahabubnagar district.
11. Maganur, Mahabubnagar district.
12. Siṅgavatnam, Mahabubnagar district.
13. Wanapartī, Mahabubnagar district.
14. Saṅgāreḍḍī, Medak district.
15. Pullur, Medak district.
16. Ārmoor, Nizāmābād District.
17. Urugōṇḍa (temple in the village), Warāṅgal district.
18. Geesugōṇḍa. Warāṅgal district.
19. Ingurti (on the hillock), Warāṅgal district.
20. Palakurti (on the hill), Warāṅgal district.

The survey of eighty seven Narasimha images and sculptures shows that god Narasimha is regarded as one of the most favourite incarnations of God Viṣṇu in almost all the parts of Telangāṇa. The early images of Narasimha are two handed, but as the cult expanded, the iconography of Narasimha became complex, growing into multiple hands.³⁵ Narasimha worship, as is evident from his iconography, is influenced by Tantrism. Lord Narasimha occupies the position of a cult-deity rather than remaining merely an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The five varieties of Narasimha images i.e. Kēvala, Girija, Yōga, Sthauna and Lakshmī Narasimha are popular in Telangāṇa under study. Lakshmī Narasimha occupies a prominent place and then follows the other varieties, such as Kēvala Narasimha, Girija Narasimha, Sthauna Narasimha and Yōga Narasimha. Surprisingly next to Lakshmi Narasimha images are the formless or no fixed form images of Narasimha, which, as a matter of fact, occupy the second position in the list of the popular forms of god Narasimha.

As per the survey of the presiding deities of the temples, dedicated to god Narasima, made by the author, chronologically the earliest presiding deity is Yōga Narasimha (1093 A.D.), which is from the temple of Narasimha at Ālampur of Mahabubnagar district. This forms of Narasimha. Under the category of the popular forms of Narasimha, as mentioned above, stands last in the list. But the priority list of popular forms is determined by the availability of extant images and sculptures. Then follows Sthauna Narasimha (1114 A.D.) from Māmiḷlapalli of Mahabubnagar district. But this form of Narasimha occupies fourth Place in the list of the popular forms of Narasimha in Telangāna. The third is Lakshmī Narasimha (1415 A.D.) from Ingurti of Waraṅgal district. But this form of Narasimha occupies pre-eminent position in the list of the popular forms of Narasimha. The fourth, according to chronology, is Giriḷa Narasimha (1567 A.D.) from Dharmapuri of Karīmṇagar district. but this form is the third in the list of popular forms of Narasimha. The last type in chronological order is Kēvala Narasimha (1664 A.D.) from Śanigaram of Karīmṇagar district. But this form is second in the list of the popular forms of Narasimha in Telangāna.

There is a temple of Narasimha on the hill of Yelgandal village in Karīmṇagar district. Where the deity of image is identified with "three nāmas" (Śrīvaiṣṇava caste-marks). According to an unpublished inscription found at Yelagandal,³⁵ the temple was in existence in the year 1202 A. D. But it is difficult to establish that at that time also, the deity was identified with three caste-marks.

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20. Bammera Pōtana, Śrīmadāndhra Bhagavatam, Saptama Skandam, Birth of Naraśimha.

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“Ugram vīram Mahā Vishṇum
Jvalantam Sarvatō mukham
Nrisimha Bhīṣaṇam bhadram
Mrityu mrityum namāmyaham.”

“I salute the god of deaths. He is ferocious and valiant
Mahā Vishṇu and Nrisimha”

22. *Isādyashtōttara Śātōpanishadah*, S. No. 19, p. 138.
In the Mahā Nārāyaṇa upanishat, the Gāyātrīmantra of
the Lord is as follows.

“Vajra nakhāya vidmahe
Tikṣṇa daṁṣṭrāya dhīmahi,
Tannō Nārasimha prachōdayāt.”

“May Nrisimha, whom we meditate as having sharp
claws and keen fangs, inspire us.”

23. *Agnipurāṇa*, Chapter 306.
24. See the temple of Pārik Mandir, Bēgum Bazar, Hyderābād
in Chapter IV of this book.
25. See the temple of Bheemgal in Nizāmābād district IV of
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CONCLUSION

Religious cults played a significant role in moulding the life and institutions of India from the early historic times. The principal ingredients, which go to make a cult, are belief, symbol-worship and rituals and festivals. Among the several cults in India, the cult of god Narasimha is an important and powerful one. In Āndhra Pradesh, there are more than three hundred temples dedicated to this deity, where the worship is being done today. Particularly in the region of Telangāṇa, this deity and cult are popular. There are more than two hundred temples, dedicated to this deity, on record in this region: As per the survey made by the author in Telangāṇa region, there are one hundred and seventy six known centres, where worship is going on today. Many of these are pilgrim centres, where people go in thousands to redeem their vows. Many persons and places bear the name of Lord Narasimha. Lord Narasimha occupies the position of a cult deity rather than remaining merely as an incarnation of God Vishṇu. The following table gives an account of the extent of the cult of Narasimha in the ten districts of the Telangāṇa area.

S.No.	Name of the district	Number of centres of worship
(1)	(2)	(3)
<hr/>		
1.	Karīmṇagar	35
2.	Nalgonda	27
3.	Warāṅgal	27
4.	Mahabubnagar	19
5.	Medak	17
6.	Nizāmābād	14

(1)	(2)	(3)
7.	Hyderābād	14
8.	Khammam	11
9.	Ādilābād	7
10.	Raṅgā Reddy	5
Total		176

It shows that the Karīmṇagar district has more number of Narasimha centres than other districts. Then follow Nalgonda, Warāṅgal, Mahabubnagar, Medak, Nizāmābād, Hyderābād, Khammam and other districts.

The various sources tapped for tracing and constructing the history of the cult of Narasimha in Telangāṇa area are mainly archaeological and literary ones. Traditions, oral and recorded, and experiences of the devotees supplement the sources.

The earliest temple of Lord Narasimha in Telangāṇa region is at Vāḍapalli (Wazīrābād) of Nalgonda district, which is assignable to Circa 7th century A.D. We have no historical evidence of the existence of this cult, though there is a literary source, which shows the existence of a temple, dedicated to god Narasimha, at Dharmapuri in Karīmṇagar district in 928 A.D. Since then, there are evidences for the growth and spread of Narasimha Cult in 12th, 13th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th and 20th centuries. The cult flourished during 15th-17th centuries in Telangāṇa region. Though the temples became the targets of Vandalism during the Muslim rule for sometime and suffered damage, the spiritual vigour of Hindu religion and Philosophy survived.

After the dawn of independence, there is a tremendous revival and reinforcement of the religious spirit. The cult grows

up and spreads, among other things, by the rich amount of the ancient traditions. The experiences of the devotees have much to do with the growth of the cult of Narasimha. It is faith that counts more than reason. The devotees visit the temples to pay their respects to the Lord and fulfil their vows to Him. It is a firm belief prevalent among the people that the Lord will cure the incurable diseases and bless them with children. Besides, the devotees visit the temples of Narasimha yearly as their family-god (Ilavēlupu) and fulfil their vows to Him, though they also visit other temples, which are more popular.

A great contributory factor to the development and sustenance of the Narasimha Cult has been the various rituals and festivals which are being performed and celebrated in the temples and are the focal points of social gatherings of different walks of life, irrespective of caste or creed. The modes of worship of god Narasimha in vogue are Pāncharātra, Vaikhānasa, Smārta, Madhwa and Nimbārg. But the Pāncharātra type of worship is the most predominant. Most of the priests belong to the Śrīvaiṣṇava community and a few priests belong to other communities, like Smārtas, Gouḍa, Dāsari, Kammari, Liṅgāyat, Musṭṭi, Muthārcha and Golla. The inscriptions of Telangāṇa make occasional references to the celebration of festivals in the temples of Narasimha. A general reference to the celebration of "utsavas", however, is found in some literary records.

There is an interesting and significant piece of information available about the iconography of Narasimha, who is being worshipped all over the region. A general noteworthy feature of the iconography of Narasimha is that ten forms of Narasimha are found in Telangāṇa area. From the survey of select centres of Narasimha worship in Telangāṇa region under study, there are eighty seven images and sculptures. From the available examples, the highest number of the images and sculptures belong to Lakshmi Narasimha. Then follow Kēvala Narasimha, Girijā Narasimha, Sthāna Narasimha, and Yōga

Narasimha. Besides, there are twenty formless or no fixed form images, where worship is being done now. The following are the most note-worthy images and sculptures for their special features.

S.No.	Name of the image/Sculpture	Place & District
1.	Kēvala Narasimha	Yādagiriguṭṭa, Nalgondā district.
2.	Kēvala Narasimha (Ugra Narasimha)	Mallur, Waraṅgal district.
3.	Kēvala Narasimha (Ugra Narasimha)	Nāla bazār, Secunderābād.
4.	Gīrijā Narasimha (Ugra Narasimha)	Nāchāram, Medak district.
5.	Gīrijā Narasimha (Ugra Narasimha)	Bhaiṁsa, Ādilābād district.
6.	Yōga Narasimha	Ālāmpur, Mahabubnagar district.
7.	Sthauna Narasimha	Ālāmpur, Mahabubnagar district.
8.	Lakshmī Narasimha	Vādapalli, (Wazīrābād), Nalgondā district.
9.	Kēvala Lakshmi Narasimha	Pārik Mandir, Bēgam bazār, Hyderābād.
10.	Yōgānanda Lakshmī Narasimha	Bheemgal, Nizāmābād district.
11.	Varahā Lakshmī Narasima Swāmy	Nāgulawancha, Khammam dis- trict.
12.	Panchamukha Nara- simha	Narasimlapalle (Nandagiri - kōṭṭa), Karīmṇagar district.
13.	Yānaka Narasimha	Bēgum bazār, Hyderābād.
14.	Hari-Hara Nara- simha	Ālāmpur (Trimurti Sannidhi), Mahabubnagar district.
15.	Tāṇḍava (Nritta) Narasimha	Trikūṭa (Thousand Pillars temple), Hanmakonda, Waraṅgal district.

A remarkable iconographic representation of the cult of Narasimha is that there is a rare sculpture of Pancha Mukha Narasimha with sixteen hands, carved on a big boulder at Narasimlapalle in Karimnagar district, which brings to light certain new aspects of Lord Narasimha.

During the period of study, the Lord is known by various names. These names continue to be popular in Telangāṇa region to this day. An interesting thing regarding the images and sculptures of Lakshmi Narasimha is that all the images and sculptures found here, have only four arms. There is an interesting tradition of associating Lord Narasimha with Chenchita, a tribal woman. The former had married the latter.

Faith transcends reason. It is the bed-rock of the cult. As the faith is developing among the devotees day by day, so is the cult of Lord Narasimha progressing in Telangāṇa region of Āndhra Pradesh.

Glossary of Select Terms

Abhaya = A mudra of protection

Abhishekam = Religious rite of pouring or sprinkling sacred water on the image of deity.

Adhyayanōtsavam = Reciting Tamil Prabandhās

Agnihōtra Stāpana = Invocation of the God of Fire

Agrahāram = Village gitting away to Brāhmīns

Agnihōtra Udvāsana = Fare well to fire God

Akhaṇḍadeepam = Burning light continuously

Akshata = Rice smeered with vermillion or turmeric powder

Amrita Snānam = Bath with a mixture of honey, curd, ghee, coconut water and sugar.

Aṅgarāṅgabhōgas = Processions and rituals with pomp.

Aṅkurārpaṇam = Inauguration ceremony

Ankuṣ = Delicious dishes of different types

Āntarāḷa = Ante - chamber

Ārādhana = Special worship

Archaka = Priest

Archana = Worship

Arghya = Oblation

Asṭadigbandhanam = Establishing a talisman at each of the eight corners, lest an evil spirit should enter the enclosed space.

Asṭōttaraśatapuja = Worship, chanting the hundred and eight names of the deity.

Avabhṛtasnānam = Purification bath after a sacrifice

Avatāram = Incarnation

Bāla Bhōgam = Offering of naivēdyam in the early hours of the day.

Baliharāṇa = Offering of cooked rice coloured red, cooked rice thrown round the temple deity

Beejaksharas = Seed words

Bhajan = Singing in chorus in praise of God

Bhāṛīpuja = ~~worship of the drums~~

Bhōgam = Food offering given to the deity

Biṇdesēva = Bringing water from the pond for worshipping the deity.

Brahmōtsavam = Grand festival, annual festival.

Bugga = Water spring

Chakram = Discus, the weapon of Lord Viṣṇu

Chāturmasā vratam = Four months vratam

Daddhōjanam = A preparation of cooked rice with curds.

Darśan = Audience

Deepārādhana = Burning oil lamp

Deepōtsavam = Festival of burning of oil lamps

Dhanurmāsōtsavam = Month during which early worship to God is celebrated.

Dhruvabērapresiding deity

Dhupam = The wave of incense smoke

Dhwājārōhaṇa = Inauguration of the festival (flag hoisting)

Dhwajāvārohaṇam = Conclusion of the festival (removing the flag)

Dhwaja Stambham = Pillar in front of the temple

Dōlārōhaṇōtsavam = Procession of a deity on a swing

Dōpōtsavam = A ritual during a festival where the deity is robbed.

Dwāra Darśanam = Visiting the Lord at the main gate of a temple.

Edurukōlu = A ritual observed during marriage ceremony of the God and his consort. The Lord is welcomed as a bride-groom.

Ekāntasēva = Worship involving placing the Lord and his consort in a swing.

Garḍādeepam = The lamp being a big hollow earthen plate filled with oil with thickly twisted wicks of cotton thread; the wicks burning before the image of the deity.

Garbhālayam = Sanctum, innershrine.

Garuḍasēva = Procession on a vehicle depicting the sacred kite.

Gṇṇḍam = Pool

Hārati = Wave offering generally with lighted camphor or wick dipped in the ghee

Havanam = Rituals connected with offerings to the god of fire

Hōmam = Sacrifice, offerings made to the god of fire

Huṇḍi = receptacle placed in a temple for collecting the cash paid by the devotees for liquidating their vows.

Ishtadēvaṭa = Chosen deity.

Jāgaraṇa or **Jāgāram** = Keeping awake throughout the night in meditation.

Jammipuja = Worship of a kind of tree (*prosopis spicigera*) associated with the epics.

Japam = Repeating the maṇṭram initiated by the guru

Jātara = Fair

Jayanṭi = Birthday

Kalyaṇōtsavam = Marriage ceremony

Kalyāṇamaṇṭapam = Wedding hall

Koṇḍabali = Sacrifice in the name of the hills

Kōnēru = Pond

Kōrameesālu = Sharp moustaches

Kshētram = A holy place

Kumbhābhishēkam = Holy bath with pots full of water

Kumba Puja = Worship with vermilion

Maātmyam = Power or greatness

Makuta = A crown, cap

Makara Saṅkramaṇa = The time when the sun returns to the North.

Mangalasnānam = Bath of deity in a river or pond

Moolavigraham = Presiding deity

Mudra = Gesture with fingers

Mukhamantapam = Entrance Hall, front hall.

Nāga = Cobra

Naivēdyam = Offering in kind made to God.

Nāmam = Vaishṇavite caste mark represented by three vertical lines on the forehead

Nāma Saṅkeertana = Sing in praise of God

Niluvudōpiḍi = Giving away all the ornaments on the person

Nyāsa = Touching parts of the body while chanting

Padma = Lotus flower

Pallakisēva = Procession of a deity in a palanquin

Pānakam = Jaggery solution tastefully spiced

pañchalōhā = An alloy of five metals viz. copper, brass (or gold); tin (or silver), lead and iron

Pañchāmṛtam = Preparation made of milk, sugar, honey and curds.

pañchāyatam = A place where there are five deities i. e.

Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇapati, Surya, Pārvati and Nāgeṇdra.

Pavalimpu Utsavam/Pānupu Sēva/or Priyaṅka Sēva = Putting the Lord to bed with soft music etc.

parama Padōtsavam = Festival invoking the blessings of heaven

Pāruvēṭa = Pāru means run and 'vēṭa' means hunt.

Pasupu = Turmeric powder

Pōṅali = A preparation with rice and green gramdhal

Prabha = A longstand with a conical tip and covered with a designed cloth.

Prabhā maṇḍalam = Nimbus

Pradakṣiṇa = Going round the deity or the temple.

Prasādam = Eatable distributed after offering to deity.

Pratishtha = Installation

Puḷihōra = A preparation with rice and tamarind Juice etc

Puṇyahavāchanam = Sprinkling of sanctified water

Pushkariṇi = Sacred pond

Rathōtsavam = Temple car-festival,

Sahasranāma puja = Worship chanting thousand names of the deity.

Śakatōtsavam = Cart-festival

Śakata Pradakṣiṇa = Carts being taken round a temple

Sālagrāma = A kind of sacred stone, a species of black ammonite worshipped by Vaiṣṇavites.

Śami = A kind of tree (*Prosopis spicigera*)

Samprōkṣhaṇa = Cleansing, Lustration

Śaṅkha = Conch

Śatakam = Book of 100 poems

Shathagōpam = The silver crown to touch the devotees on their heads as a mark of blessing

Ślōka = Couplet or quatrain in Sanskrit

Smārta = The sect of non-vaishṇavite Brāhmins.

Soumya rupa = Graceful appearance

Sthala purāṇam = History of the place

Stōtram = Praising, utterings in praise of God

Talambrālu = Main function connected with the marriage

Teertham = Sacred or sanctified water

Teppōtsavam = Boat Procession

Tirumanjanam = Bathing

Tirunakshatram = Natal constellations obtaining at the time of birth

Tiruppāvai Utsavam = Festival celebrated in Dhanurmāsam

Tulasi = The holy basil (*ocimum sanctum*)

Ugrarupa = Awe inspiring posture

Usirikāya = *Phyllanthus emblica*

Utsava Vighrahas = Procession images

Vāhanam = Vehicle

Varadahastam = A pose of hand of deities signifying the attitude of conferring a boon or bestowing favours.

Viśwarupadarśanam = Showing of the original form of Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu

Yagna = Sacrifice.

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MS dated 1430 A.D. of Dharmapuri Narasimha temple.

A copy of an inscription in old temple (present mosque) of Dharmapuri by Gaṇḍedharmā Rāo.

MS of the construction of new temple of Narasimha in Dharmapuri in 1448 AD.

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MS of construction of Pāta Nararasimha Swāmy's temple in Dharmapuri villag during 1724-1750.

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Description of the Plates

PLATE I : Kēvala Narasimha – Panchavīras. (Koṇḍamōṭu, Guṇṭūr District)

This sculpture is found on a hillock at Koṇḍamōṭu village of Palanadu taluk in Guṇṭūr District. It is now preserved in the office of the Director of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Āndhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. This is the earliest known sculpture of Lord Narasimha in animal representation. It belongs to the fourth century A.D.

PLATE II : Girijā Narasimha - Pāta (old) Narasimha Swāmy. (Dharmapuri, Karīmṇagar District).

This image is in the garbhagriha of the temple of pāta (old) Narasimha Swāmy at Dharmapuri of Karīmṇagar District, which belongs to the 16th century A. D.

PLATE III : Yōga Narasimha. (Vadḍemānu, Mahabubnagar District)

This image is installed in the local museum at Vadḍemānu (Vardhamānapuram) in Mahabubnagar District. It belongs to the 12th century A.D.

PLATE IV : Narasimha in Hari–Hara aspects. (Ālampur, Mahabubnagar District)

This image is in one of the Pāpanāśa group of the temples, which are at a distance of about two kilometres from the South of Ālampur town: It is said that the temple belongs to the 13th–14th century A.D. The image of god Narasimha in Hari–Hara aspects, which is rare, was shifted to the Bāla Brahmēśvara temple. It is now on the circumambulatory passage of the sanctum of Bala Brahmēśvara temple.

PLATE V : Yōga Narasimha. (Brāhmaṇvāḍa, Hanmakōṇḍa, Warangal District)

This image is in the sanctum of the temple which, it is stated, was built about seventy years ago. It belongs to the 12th century A.D.



PLATE I : Kēvala Narasimha - Panchaviras.
(Kōṇḍamōṭu, Guṇṭūr District)



PLATE II : Gīrtā Narasimha - Pāta (old) Narasimha Swāmy.
(Dharmapuri, Kāṛīmṇagar District).



PLATE III : Yōga Narasimha.
(Vaḍḍemānu, Mahabubnagar District)



PLATE IV : Narasimha in Hari—Hara aspects.
(Ālampur, Mahabubnagar District)



PLATE V : Yōga Narasimha.

(Brāhmaṇvāḍa, Hanmakōṇḍa, Warangal Dstrict)